

LAURENTIA.



LETTER XVI.

IN CONTINUATION OF MRS. LACELLS'S
HISTORY.

“THE family were in their respective
“apartments soon after eleven, and
“as the air was rather chilly, I threw a
“great coat over my other dress, and
“when I thought all were quiet stole softly
“down stairs.

“On opening the outward door, I per-
“ceived a smart shower was falling,

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“my

“ my conscience gave me a twinge—I
“ was half resolved to go back again, and
“ stood a few moments to deliberate—
“ Lacells expects me, thought I, he is
“ unmindful of the weather; and 'tis the
“ only opportunity I can have to beg that
“ he will come prepared to-morrow to
“ vindicate himself—he must love me
“ better for so much anxiety on his ac-
“ count—I need not stay long, and it
“ would be cruel to keep the poor Lieu-
“ tenant in fruitless expectation.”

“ I was determined, reached an um-
“ brella, and sallied forth. The rain still
“ continuing we betook ourselves under
“ a shed that was built for the deer, and
“ on my communicating as much as I
“ knew of the contents of the Earl of
“ S——’s letter, Lacells counterfeited the
“ most poignant grief, and said, nothing
“ now remained for him, but to bid me a
“ last adieu, to tear himself from my pre-
“ sence, and end his miserable existence
“ far

“ far distant from the charms that had
“ enslaved his heart.—I again urged the
“ forgiving temper of my father, who I
“ knew could not be inflexible to my en-
“ treaties. Lacells again availed himself
“ of that plea, and conjured me to put it
“ out of their power to with-hold that
“ forgiveness, by going off that instant ;
“ adding, he had a chaise and four waiting
“ without the pales of the park. I was
“ at first shocked at the proposal (though
“ I might have expected it, from the con-
“ versation in the morning) and totally
“ unprepared for it, but he scarcely gave
“ me time to consider ; for partly by per-
“ suasions, and partly by force, he led me
“ to the boundaries of the park, and lift-
“ ing me over into the road, where we
“ were joined by his servant, they con-
“ ducted me to the carriage, which was
“ soon in the high road for London, where
“ we arrived early the next evening.”

“ We stopped at an hotel in Oxford-
“ Street, and I was taken out of the chaise
“ half dead with fatigue and remorse, but
“ it was then too late to recede; I was
“ obliged to submit to the directions of
“ my lover, who did not suffer me to re-
“ main long at the hotel:—He discharged
“ all those who accompanied us (except
“ his own man) and came into the room
“ where I had thrown myself on two
“ chairs, begged ten thousand pardons
“ for hurrying me about, but said it was
“ absolutely necessary I should go from
“ thence immediately, as he doubted not
“ but a pursuit would be made after us,
“ and I could not wonder that he was so-
“ licitous to preserve the treasure he
“ had seized.”

“ A hack-coach was called into which
“ I got, and was drove through two or
“ three streets, that coach discharged, and
“ another called, which was repeated se-
“ veral times, 'till I own my patience was
“ quite

“ quite exhausted—at last we were set
“ down in some private street, May-Fair.
“ I was handed out and conducted up
“ stairs into very comfortable apartments.
“ Lacells proposed my occupying them
“ a couple of days (pleading his anxiety
“ for my health) and supposing that my
“ father would proceed directly to Gretna-
“ Green, (without he could gain informa-
“ tion of the rout we had taken) ima-
“ gining we were gone thither. He like-
“ wise promised to lodge in another house
“ himself; but if I had no objection
“ he should rather take a trip to France
“ than Scotland, and he thought we should
“ not meet with so many disagreeable
“ circumstances attending the former as
“ the latter.”

“ It was a matter of indifference to me;
“ indeed, if any thing, I preferred going
“ to France, because it was more out of
“ the common way. After two days,
“ we accordingly set out for Dover, got

“ on board the packet, arrived safe at
“ Calais, were married, and proceeded to
“ Paris, from whence I wrote to my pa-
“ rents, telling them what I had done,
“ and imploring their blessing and for-
“ giveness.

“ I had an answer from my father as
“ soon as possible, intreating my speedy
“ return, if I wished ever to see my mother
“ again; for that my imprudent and un-
“ grateful behaviour, together with not
“ hearing what was become of me for so
“ long a time, had brought on a fever
“ which was attended with very alarming
“ symptoms—that perhaps a sight of me
“ might be of greater service than medi-
“ cines, which had hitherto proved of no
“ effect; on her account therefore, he con-
“ jured me to make no delay.—For him-
“ self, he would say nothing—his hopes
“ rested in heaven, for it was there alone
“ he could now know peace.”

“ I was greatly affected at this intelligence, and with my husband set out immediately, making all imaginable expedition. The wind was unfavourable on our return, and detained us a day and night at Calais. I had there time for self-reproach—the thorns I had planted in the bosoms of my indulgent parents began to rankle in my own. I expected consolation from my husband, but I found it not. Unused to melancholy and complaints, he was endeavouring to dissipate his cares by drowning them in french wine, of which he with much carelessness invited me to partake.”

“ We were summoned to the vessel by five o'clock in the morning, never having been in bed all night, from the expectation of going on board sooner. The water was rough, and I experienced all the inconvenience of it, being dreadfully sick the whole time; at

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“ length we landed, and went post to
“ Woodcote (my father's seat) scarce ever
“ stoping even to take proper refresh-
“ ment.”

“ When we arrived, the servants
“ crowded about me, with woe-fraught
“ countenances, and soon carried what
“ they thought joyful news to the sick
“ chamber. My father was there, and
“ communicated it to his beloved wife,
“ she wished to see me as soon as I
“ pleased. I therefore left Mr. Lacells
“ below, and flew to the bed-side; my
“ father had withdrawn to the window,
“ and stood with his back towards me.
“ I dropped on my knees, and seizing the
“ hand of my mother, would have carried
“ it to my lips, but overcome by fatigue,
“ and the conflicting emotions of my own
“ breast, I could only gently press it, and
“ fell lifeless on the floor. When I recov-
“ ered, I found myself on my own bed,
“ my

“ my husband and father both attending,
“ and using every means to restore me.”

“ I am quite well, said I, let me go
“ instantly to my mother, and assure her
“ her forgiveness alone is wanting to
“ make me happy.”

“ Not this evening, said my father, to
“ see you thus will only increase the vio-
“ lence of her disorder. I submitted, and
“ passed a wretched night. In the morn-
“ ing my father met us in the breakfast
“ parlour, he had a paper in his hand,
“ which on our entering, he tore in seve-
“ ral pieces. This, said he, addressing
“ Mr. Lacells, was the letter I received
“ from the Earl of S—, thus I destroy
“ it, and I will endeavour to erase the
“ contents of it from my memory; if your
“ heart is the seat of any generous senti-
“ ments, surely you will not abuse the
“ confidence I mean to place in you;
“ love my child and behave kindly to her,

“ I will then forget what is past, and be
“ your friend.”

“ I fell on my knees, and grasped the
“ hand of my excellent father—I would
“ henceforth be every thing he wished.
“ He raised me up, folded me in his
“ arms, and blessed me with a faltering
“ voice; but said, he had now no longer
“ a right to command me; I had chosen
“ another protector, and oh! my Aubery,
“ may he but idolize you as I have done.
“ Lacells affected to be moved at this
“ scene, and promised fair to be a good
“ husband and a submissive son.”

“ I had then an interview with my mo-
“ ther, who was something better, she
“ likewise readily forgave me, imparting
“ a solemn blessing, and from the time of
“ my return, appeared to mend, though
“ but slowly.”

“ For

“ For a few days the behaviour of my
“ husband was unexceptionable, but he
“ soon gave me to understand, that he
“ could not bear the idea of living in
“ another man’s house—he chose to have
“ one of his own, where he might occa-
“ sionally invite his friends; for although
“ the hospitality of my father might ren-
“ der them welcome, yet it was too mor-
“ tifying to receive them in such a situ-
“ ation.

“ I slightly hinted these wishes to my
“ father, who heaved a deep sigh and
“ said, he was sorry Mr. Lacells could
“ not be happy at Woodcote, where he
“ might command as he pleased; but,
“ however, if he will consent to live in
“ this neighbourhood, I will endeavour to
“ find a house for him, and engage to pay
“ you quarterly £150; I must insist on
“ your regulating your expences accord-
“ ingly. Out of that income Mr. Lacells
“ may keep a couple of horses; and your

" mother's carriage will be always at your
" service."

" Lacells objected to living in W—
" shire, he would rather my father paid
" him down £10,000 at once, which was
" no more than my fortune had been
" estimated at, by every body—he had a
" few debts that he wished to discharge,
" and the money might afterwards be
" placed in the funds. Notwithstanding
" the insolence of this request, my dear
" father, ever accommodating, and de-
" sirous of exciting the gratitude of my
" husband, so far complied with it, as to
" offer £1000 at first setting out, but de-
" clared he would do no more, and we
" were still to expect the £500 per Annum."

" Before my mother was quite well
" enough to leave her chamber, I was
" hurried to London, and placed in a
" ready furnished house in Mortimer-
" street, which was soon crowded by a set
" of

“ of dissipated rakes. We had company
“ almost every day, and lived in a far
“ higher stile than our allowance war-
“ ranted.”

“ A few respectable families visited me
“ on my first going to town, but dropt
“ me by degrees, when they saw how we
“ went on.”

“ I ventured to expostulate, but it
“ availed nothing—Lacells became very
“ desirous of getting into the guards. My
“ father was again applied to, and again
“ complied with the demand, raising a
“ sum sufficient to purchase a captain’s
“ commission, though it was accompanied
“ with a declaration that it was the last
“ money he could spare us, and as our
“ income would now receive a very con-
“ siderable addition, we ought to think
“ ourselves well off.

“ I verily believe the extravagance of
“ my husband would have made him run
“ out of the largest fortune in England,
“ could he have commanded it. I saw
“ him but seldom, he was always engaged,
“ and too fashionable to have his wife in
“ the party.”

“ I must not attempt to deny, but that
“ I had likewise my engagements; but
“ the expences incurred by them was tri-
“ fling, in comparison of Lacells's. I ever
“ avoided play, to which my unhappy
“ husband was much addicted, and at
“ which he lost very large sums.”

“ The next summer after I married, I
“ was desirous of visiting my mother, and
“ Lacells agreed to the proposal with
“ pleasure—he informed me, he intended
“ spending a couple of months at Paris,
“ and therefore we might give up the
“ house we then lived in, and take another
“ on his return. He accordingly sent me
“ into

" into W—shire with only a few guineas.
" in my pocket; and borrowing from
" every creature that would lend him
" money, he set out for France."

" Young and thoughtless as I then was,
" I became tolerably contented while I
" remained at Woodcote; every thing
" was again subservient to my pleasure,
" nor did I suffer many uneasy reflections
" concerning the conduct of my husband,
" to disturb my peace. I looked forward
" to my father's fortune as a resource; and
" I did not doubt but he would take pro-
" per care to secure something handsome
" for me."

" One circumstance only damped the
" joy I felt from having every command
" obeyed, every wish gratified, and that
" was the declining health of my mother.
" She had never entirely recovered the
" shock of my marriage—she forgave me,
" and appeared to be satisfied, but she
" foresaw

“ foresaw I must be miserable, and it
“ preyed on her spirits, bringing on com-
“ plaints that were likely to cut short the
“ thread of life.”

“ Mr. Lacells wrote to me in very af-
“ fectionate terms during his summer ex-
“ cursions; perhaps he supposed his letters
“ would be seen by my father, and hoped
“ they would procure him a supply on his
“ return—nor was he mistaken. I wished
“ to find excuses for conduct, that was in
“ reality inexcusable; and was glad of the
“ opportunity of observing, that whatever
“ Mr. Lacells’s behaviour might be, in
“ other respects, he had always preserved
“ a tender respectful conduct towards me.”

“ At the end of three months he came
“ to England, and was soon in W—shire,
“ affected great delight at seeing me again,
“ and paid some compliments on my im-
“ proved looks. The first moment we
“ were alone, he assumed a graver coun-
“ tenance,

“ tenance, and told me, that unless I could
“ intercede with my father to advance him
“ something considerable, he must be se-
“ parated from his dear Aubery for ever,
“ and end his days in a prison. He owned
“ that he had been very unlucky at play,
“ and was no longer in possession of his
“ commission, he had been obliged to dis-
“ pose of that and every thing else of
“ value that belonged to him; nor dared
“ he to show his face in town, without
“ money in his pocket. He pretended so
“ much contrition, and made such violent
“ protestations that he never would be led
“ into any thing of the kind again, that I
“ was silly enough to believe him, and
“ importuned my father to relieve his dis-
“ tresses, saying, it should be the last time
“ I ever would ask such a favor for my
“ husband.”

“ My father was not quite so credu-
“ lous as myself, he entertained but little
“ hopes of a reformation, though he
“ offered:

“ offered to discharge our most pressing
“ debts, and to maintain us both, if we
“ would live at Woodcote.”

“ 'Twas an offer I would have em-
“ braced with thankfulness, but Mr. La-
“ cells said, he could not submit; the
“ offer, though generous, shewed that my
“ father had no confidence in him; that
“ he would sooner be a slave on our West
“ India plantations than live in servile
“ subjection at home, with a man who
“ was capable of doubting his word. If
“ my father would only redeem his com-
“ mission, otherwise he must tear himself
“ from me, and bid a lasting adieu to his
“ native country. Happy had it been for
“ me if I had tried him; but, infatuated
“ as I was, the idea was insupportable.”

“ I wept, I prayed, I knelt to my father,
“ who at length consented, though he
“ owned it was very inconvenient, nor
“ could

“ could we expect that he should continue
“ his allowance afterwards.”

“ Rejoiced that I had gained my point,
“ I flew to my husband, who received the
“ intelligence but coldly, he bit his lips
“ at the latter part of it, and said, then we
“ can have only lodgings—’twas no mat-
“ ter, he should not regret it, only as it
“ made his wife appear of less conse-
“ quence. I assured him, it would give
“ me no concern, I could be as happy in
“ lodgings, as in a house of my own, and
“ I should have less care.”

“ Lacells did not thank my father with
“ half the fervor I wished, and when we
“ left Woodcote the parting on their side
“ was very formal. I passed an uncomfor-
“ able winter in town, being frequently
“ without a guinea.”

“ My dear mother died in the spring,
“ leaving me a valuable watch and a few
“ diamonds.

“ diamonds. My father apprised me of
“ it, but as I could not wear them while
“ in deep mourning, he hoped to see me
“ in the country before they would become
“ useful.”

“ Lacells insisted on my asking for
“ them immediately. My father was dis-
“ pleased at such haste, which he thought
“ no good sign, and persisted in refusing
“ to give them up at present.”

“ Our necessities became every day
“ more conspicuous. My husband again
“ parted with his commission, by ex-
“ changing it for a lieutenancy, and gam-
“ bled away the money he received for the
“ exchange. Yet he so far governed his
“ temper, as to treat me with civility, and
“ sometimes with fondness, from the hope
“ of working on my father, to whom he
“ again sent me the next summer, but did
“ not chuse to accompany me himself;
“ and

“ and I was charged by him, not to return
“ without the jewels.”

“ During my visit, my father offered
“ to support me, if I would give up my
“ husband, and promise never to see him
“ again ; but that was a proposition to
“ which I could not consent, and after a
“ stay of two months, I returned to town,
“ and was conducted by my husband to
“ lodgings greatly inferior to those I
“ quited when I set out for the country.
“ The valuables I brought with me were
“ soon disposed of, and procured only a
“ temporary supply, yet we scrambled on
“ for some months, and gained fresh cre-
“ dit from talking of my father’s fortune.”

“ In little more than a year from my
“ mother’s death, we saw in the papers, an
“ account of my father’s second marriage
“ with a person, who had been for months
“ together in the family, as a companion
“ to my mother, after I had ran away.

“ This

“ This woman was not more than thirty,
“ cunning and artful to a degree, with a
“ numerous tribe of needy relations.”

“ I thought Lacells would have gone
“ distracted, he raved and swore, cursing
“ my father, the woman he had married,
“ me, himself, and the whole world. His
“ hopes were now compleatly blasted,
“ there remained no motive for him to
“ wear a mask any longer, he said; he
“ hated me, nor should he keep up the
“ appearance of respect; I might leave
“ him, and go nurse the little imps I
“ should have the pleasure of calling bro-
“ thers and sisters. In short, his violence
“ was so extreme, I expected he would
“ have beat me; at length it subsided,
“ and he grew calm, but the affair became
“ public, our creditors had notice of it,
“ and came flocking from all quarters;
“ my husband was arrested and con-
“ ducted to the King’s-Bench.”

“ I

“ I wrote to my father in great distress,
“ but received an answer from his wife,
“ that she had taken the liberty of open-
“ ing my letter, and concealing the con-
“ tents from Mr. Paulin, as he, poor man,
“ had suffered too much from my im-
“ prudent conduct before; she advised me
“ not to disturb his peace by any future
“ letters, and inclosed a £10 bill, which
“ she hoped I would make a good use of,
“ and endeavour to do something towards
“ maintaining myself.”

“ I wrote again, and got another person
“ to direct the letter, that the hand-wri-
“ ting might not be known; but it was
“ returned to me the next post in a blank
“ cover.”

“ I then determined to risk a personal
“ interview, and sold or pawned almost
“ every thing I had left, to equip myself
“ for the journey, which I was obliged to
“ undertake, for the first time, in a stage
“ coach.”

“ I stopped at S—, a small town
“ about five miles from my father’s house,
“ and being told by the mistress of the
“ inn, that there was to be a meeting of
“ justices next day, I thought it very
“ probable my father would be among
“ them; and that it would be better to
“ wait, as I should stand more chance of
“ succeeding when he was absent from his
“ wife.”

“ It happened as I suspected—I saw
“ my father ride down the street, and stop
“ at an inn, almost at the bottom. I was
“ so extremely agitated, as to be incapa-
“ ble of writing, and therefore sent a boy
“ to enquire for Mr. Paulin, and to tell
“ him, a stranger wished to speak with
“ him on particular business at the crown.
“ He followed the boy, and was shown
“ into the parlour—I rushed in and fell
“ at his feet; surprise deprived him of
“ speech for a time—grief, shame, and a
“ thousand conflicting passions kept me
“ silent.

“ Silent. Why, why do you thus take
“ pleasure in distressing a father you no
“ longer love? said he. — Oh! say not so,
“ my father, I have never ceased to love
“ you one moment, but I am indeed un-
“ happy. Can you bear that I should
“ linger out the rest of my wretched days
“ in a prison, deprived of the common
“ necessaries of life? For that must be
“ my doom, if you are determined to
“ afford me no relief.”

“ Could you not haye informed me
“ by letter, and saved your father the
“ pang of seeing you thus.”

“ I instantly drew out of my pocket a
“ copy of the first letter I had wrote, with
“ his wife’s answer to it; and the last,
“ which had been returned to me. Ten
“ pounds was too small a sum for Mrs.
“ Paulin to send, but tenderness to me
“ prevented her from shewing the letters.
“ What can I do for you? If I resign my

“ whole property Lacells would run
“ through it, and be a beggar. My fa-
“ ther paused, he walked about the room;
“ Aubery, said he, I will pay for your
“ board in some respectable family, and
“ allow you something handsome for your
“ private expences; or else you shall
“ have two guineas a week for your hus-
“ band and yourself, if you are deter-
“ mined not to leave him.”

“ I cannot quite desert him at such a
“ time, undeserving as he is, and will
“ gladly accept of your last offer.”

My father said, “ he was sorry I made
“ so bad a choice, for by so doing I had
“ put it out of his power to make me
“ comfortable—can nothing prevail on
“ you to abandon a man that has occa-
“ sioned so much misery in the family.—
“ To that I could make no answer, and
“ he proceeded—Will you return with
“ me this evening to Woodcote?”

“ Oh!

“ Oh! my dear Sir, I will do any thing
“ you wish me, but I fear my presence
“ there will not be agreeable. I cannot
“ expect to be received by—— I
“ could not say what I intended, my pride
“ was not sufficiently subdued to give any
“ name to a woman I detested, and whom
“ I looked on as the only obstacle be-
“ tween me and my father. He saw the
“ struggle. I can answer for a kind re-
“ ception, said he, Mrs. Paulin is too
“ obliging to me, to refuse any thing I
“ desire. I thought he meant to reproach
“ me, conscious I really deserved it, and
“ I could not forbear a retort. If my
“ company can be dispensed with, without
“ farther displeasing you, I had rather
“ not go; I have no clothes but these on
“ my back, and no spirits for a bridal
“ visit. A deep blush crossed my father’s
“ cheeks. Aubery, said he, somewhat an-
“ grily, I should never have taken such a
“ step, had you behaved properly. — I

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“ know

“ know it, I know it, but culpable as I
“ am, I cannot encounter her presence.”

“ What do you now propose? said he,
“ rather softened. To return by to-mor-
“ row’s coach, and cheer the heart of poor
“ Lacells, by an account of your gene-
“ rosity. My father was affected. Tell
“ him likewise, said he, that if he behaves
“ well to my child, he shall receive an
“ additional ten pounds every quarter;
“ but remember, that is the extent of what
“ I can do. He then gave me a £20 bill
“ and a few guineas, to defray my ex-
“ pences back again, and left me overpow-
“ ered with gratitude for his goodness.”

“ Lacells was disappointed that I had
“ not procured him a release; but on my
“ declaring, with more spirit than I had
“ ever before dared to shew, that if he
“ expressed the smallest discontent, I
“ would entirely leave him, as my father
“ had ordered his banker to pay the mo-
“ ney

“ ney into my hands every week, and
“ therefore I had full power to live where-
“ ever I pleased. He became more pa-
“ cified, yet starts of ill-humour would
“ sometimes break out, in cursing his fate,
“ and regrets at not having the command
“ of a sum sufficient to try his luck for a
“ good stake once more.”

“ Six years did I remain an inhabitant
“ of that prison, which was far from being
“ the gloomy place you might suppose
“ it. . We had plenty of company, such
“ as had been used to figure away in the
“ fashionable world; and we contrived to
“ entertain ourselves with one amusement
“ or other, (my father often sending pre-
“ fents of value, besides our stated allow-
“ ance.)

“ My husband had ever since his con-
“ finement, accustomed himself to drink
“ large quantities of spirits, which at
“ length destroyed his constitution and

“ ended his days. His last moments were
“ terrible! — He knew he must, and
“ yet was afraid to die—lost to hope, and
“ abandoned to despair, he was very near
“ hastening that period he so much
“ dreaded, and survived the diabolical at-
“ tempt only three days, resigning his
“ wretched existence in agonies unspeak-
“ able!” —

“ The impression made on my mind
“ by this event, waked a thorough re-
“ formation in my heart! — I resolved, if
“ my life was spared, to spend it in a very
“ different manner! I left the King’s-
“ Bench, and taking a cheap lodging,
“ wrote to my father, and told him, he
“ might do with me as he pleased, for I
“ felt so humbled, he could place me in
“ no situation that would give birth to
“ complaints!”

“ This letter was answered in person,
“ it brought my father to town, who soon
“ acknowledged

“ acknowledged himself very unhappy
“ from his second choice of a wife — he
“ solicited me to return with him. I ac-
“ cepted the invitation, and was intro-
“ duced to my mother-in-law, who re-
“ ceived me very ungraciously. Suffice
“ it to say, I continued almost eight years
“ in the same house with her, and not-
“withstanding her aggravating temper,
“ we never absolutely quarrelled. I was
“ determined not to embitter the peace of
“ my father by any disagreements be-
“ tween us; and therefore endeavoured
“ to conceal as much of her insolence as
“ possible. He saw that I submitted in
“ every thing, and loved me the better
“ for it; leaving me at his death, every
“ thing that was not settled on his wife.
“ Woodcote-house being her jointure, I
“ left it immediately after my father’s
“ funeral, nor have I ever seen Mrs.
“ Paulin since.”

“ I went to London for some time, but
“ having contracted a love for the coun-
“ try, I sold a little estate in W—shire,
“ to purchase that I now occupy. The
“ house being old, and having been neg-
“ lected some years, I pulled it quite
“ down, and have built a new one exactly
“ after my own taste, and at which I hope
“ to have the pleasure of seeing you ladies
“ very often.”

Mrs. Lacells ceased speaking, and as we were joined by the gentlemen soon after, there was no time for comments on her story; she spent the evening with us, and we returned her visit the next day, passing some agreeable hours in her company. Notwithstanding all her boasted love of solitude, I am much mistaken if she supports herself through a winter there. Nor can you wonder at it, Maria, when you consider the events that have befall her. Much reason has she for self re- proach, of which she appears fully sensible,

and

and declares, "that nothing but having
" an opportunity of smoothing in some
" degree the last years of her father's life,
" could at all reconcile her to herself;
" and that at times the reflection of
" having in a manner forced him to
" marry again, more than overbalances
" the little merit she can accrue to her-
" self, from softening, and rendering less
" painful, the reproaches and severe sar-
" casms of his artful and ill tempered
" wife."

Laurentia pities her, but Mrs. Lacells
is not altogether the character to engage
her confidence; she could not be equally
communicative, and told me (as we came
home) "that the very idea of Mrs. La-
" cells's having related the most material
" circumstances in her life, in order to
" encourage us to throw off all reserve
" on our part, had had quite the contrary
" effect on her, and put a seal on her lips,
" which it would be impossible to break."

We however saw Mrs. Lacells every day while we remained at Castlemoor, but Laurentia was inflexible, she could not be persuaded to exceed the limited week, and I took leave of those charming scenes with regret.

The study was the last room I visited, my eyes were never satiated with gazing on the form of my dear mother; and I promised the smiling shade that I would preserve the likeness in my memory till I should be permitted the felicity of beholding it again.

Nothing worth mentioning happened during our journey back to Berrywood, where we found every thing much as we left it. Adieu. Believe me most affectionately yours.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

M^R. Townsend, the curate (whom I have mentioned before) was here yesterday. Laurentia, who rather dislikes the poor man, would not come down; and my uncle being gone a ride, I was left alone with the parson.

I could not but observe there was an air of melancholy in his countenance, which from the natural turn of his features for chearfulness, affected me the more. I started several subjects to engage him in conversation, but his thoughts were evidently fixed on some distant object; his chair seemed uneasy, he frequently sighed, once or twice hemmed, and at last did himself much violence, by making a formal apology for the liberty

he was going to take. I must confess, Maria, I felt rather alarmed, for I really thought he was going to make love to me; and I am afraid my blushes and childish confusion betrayed my vanity. However, he soon relieved me, by explaining the cause of his concern—saying, that as Providence had blessed me with a good fortune, he doubted not but the benevolence of my heart would prompt me to take under my protection (with the approbation of my uncle and aunt) a young woman whom chance had brought him acquainted with, and whom (if appearances might be trusted) I should find worthy of my patronage.

If you will give me leave, continued he, I will inform you of every particular, and where I first met with her. I assented, and the curate proceeded.

“Being

" Being invited to spend a few days at the lodge, which belongs to Mr. Tankre, a merchant, who is generally in this neighbourhood some months in the summer, and who is fond of coursing and shooting. He is, indeed, rather of a gay disposition, and having a wife several years older than himself, is often tempted to seek entertainment abroad, or in large companies at home, maintaining only a distant civility to Mrs. Tankre, to whom he is chiefly indebted for his elevation in the world."

" They were this summer accompanied by their niece, Miss Wilmot, a very lively young lady; and as the infirmities of Mrs. Tankre prevented her from walking out with her niece, I used to steal off as soon as I could, after dinner, and propose a ramble in the fields."

" We were one evening surprised by a sudden shower, and made a precipitate retreat.

retreat under a hovel, which afforded but indifferent shelter, and under which a young woman was likewise standing; she had an umbrella in her hand, which without thought, or so much as looking at her face, I instantly seized, and held in that direction I thought most likely to keep the rain from my fair companion, who was also too much absorbed in self to pay any attention to the stranger."

" The storm continued with encreasing violence, and our situation became very uncomfortable—with one arm round the waist of Miss Wilmot, I almost covered her with the umbrella, and never considered it was the property of another, 'till the real owner of it opened her lips, and thus addressed me. ' Your politeness to ' that lady is rather an inconvenience to ' me, for though I would willingly render ' her every civility in my power; yet this ' being the first time I have been out for ' some weeks past, owing to a long and
expensive

' expensive illness, which has enfeebled my
' constitution, and drained my pocket, it
' becomes necessary that I should take
' some care of myself, and I am very wet
' on this side.' This was pronounced in
a faint Irish accent, but with an air of so
much truth and innocence, as to set every
tender emotion of my soul afloat. — I
turned to look at her features, and instantly
perceived they still bore the marks of sick-
ness and sorrow; yet as I gazed ardently
(perhaps she at the time thought rather
rudely) on them, they were lighted up by
the hue of modesty, and became lovely in
the extreme."

" Perfectly ashamed of my rudeness, I
knew not what apologies to make; — I
hoped she would excuse my inattention,
and endeavoured to atone for it, by draw-
ing her close to Miss Wilmot, and taking
that side myself on which the rain beat
most. In a short time after, we were re-
lieved by a servant from Mr. Tankre's,
who

who had observed which way we went, and brought a cloak and umbrellas. I asked the stranger if she had far to go, and would allow me the honor of attending her; or if nearer, I could answer for her welcome reception at Mr. Tankre's. She replied, she believed she was half a mile from home, and must confess she had acted imprudently, in wandering so far, but the beauty of the evening had led her on, insensible of either time or distance—she was obliged by my civility, but she had a mother, who would be anxious on her account, and therefore she wished to hasten back the moment the storm abated."

" I could not think of leaving her in such a condition, and entreated Miss Wilmot to put herself under the care of her uncle's servant, and hoped she would excuse me, if I attended the young stranger, whose delicate frame seemed unable to support her through may difficulties."

" With

* With an arch smile and a shake of her head, Miss Wilmot consented, and in about ten minutes after we all quitted the hovel; Miss Wilmot went forward with the servant, and I supported the stranger, who took the opposite path. As we went along, she told me her abode was a mean one, that her mother and she had not occupied it more than six months, and had been one or other of them ill ever since they came. I ventured to ask, if, without being thought impertinent, I might be favored with her name. She blushed extremely, and with some hesitation replied, Eliza Fitzowen. I saw she was distressed, and endeavoured to divert her attention to indifferent subjects, 'till we reached a small house, built quite in the cottage stile, and distinguished only from a few other humble dwellings, by having cleaner windows than the rest. Eliza opened the door, and invited me in; there was two rooms below, and in the innermost sat a middle aged woman, whose countenance expressed

a look of apprehension, and who, I dare suppose had once been very handsome, one foot rested on a stool, and it was with difficulty that she arose at our entrance.—

“ Oh! my dear girl, said she, how terrified
“ have I been on your account; hasten up
“ stairs and have your cloaths changed this
“ instant, for I am sure you must be wet.
“ Excuse me, Sir, (turning to me) Eliza
“ is but just recovered from a dangerous
“ illness, I fear she may have a relapse, and
“ I have sent Peggy, our only servant, to
“ seek after her.” The young lady said it
would be necessary to change part of her
cloaths; and her poor mother lamented her
inability to stir without assistance, and said,
how glad she should be if Peggy would
return. I begged they would permit me
to be as useful as I could, and immedi-
ately fetched in some sticks, and blew up
a brisk fire; and then hoping they would
allow me to call the next morning, I took
my leave.”

“ I

"I was finely rallied when I got back to Mr. Tankre's, both by Miss Wilmot and her uncle; I thought, indeed, the latter seemed to interest himself in the adventure much more than I wished. I knew his libertine principles, and I trembled at the idea of his visiting at the cottage. I therefore affected to treat it as quite accidental, and said, I just saw the young woman home, but could give no account of her."

"Miss Wilmot had extolled the person of Eliza, and thereby excited the curiosity of Mr. Tankre; and perhaps he suspected that I was on my guard, and therefore secretly determining to satisfy himself, he dropped the subject at that time, and was unusually merry the rest of the evening."

"The next day, being saturday, I was obliged to return home, and took my leave of Mr. Tankre's family. With a book in
my

my hand, and accompanied by my dog, (who follows me every where) I went round by Mrs. Fitzowen's, where I was received with apparent pleasure by both mother and daughter. They were profuse in their acknowledgments, for the respect and delicacy with which (as they expressed themselves) I had treated them the preceding evening. I replied, it was impossible for a person of the least humanity to do otherwise. Their appearance and behaviour bespoke them superior to the station they now appeared in, and therefore they were entitled to double respect. Mrs. Fitzowen sighed, and acknowledged I had guessed right; but, said she, had Providence blessed us with health, we should have experienced more peace and comfort in this homely dwelling, than is often to be found in palaces."

"A trampling of horses with a loud rap at the door, excited a general surprise. Peggy opened it, and I heard Mr. Tan-kre's

Ikre's voice. Pray is Townsend here, said he. I don't know, Sir, said Peggy, with a low curtsey, there is a gentleman.—Aye, interrupted he, a parson, is he not. Yes, Sir, I believe so, he looks like one, however, replied the girl. Tankre dismounted, and giving his horse to his servant, came into the room with an air of triumph. He bowed to the ladies, and slaping me on the shoulder, I thought you had been gone home to make sermons for to-morrow, my boy, said he, but your dog has betrayed you; I saw Hector sitting at the door, and therefore supposed you was here. I hope the ladies will pardon this intrusion, again bowing to them. I wish I was a parson, (continued he with a half suppressed sigh) for they are privileged men, and are often admitted into the confidence of the fair-sex, while we poor lay-men, who admire the sex as much as they do, are frequently excluded."

" Nothing

" Nothing could be more unpleasant to me, than the presence of Mr. Tankre at that time; I secretly regretted my own carelessness, and wished poor Hector at the devil. We all felt embarrassed. I stammered out something of a desire I had to be informed of the ladies health, had brought me round that way, but I was going home directly."

" I must confess, returned Tankre, that I should much rather gaze on that lovely face, than pursue the dry study of divinity."

" My daughter is unused to compliments of that sort, said Mrs. Fitzowen gravely, and we should be very sorry to detain any one from their duty. Nay, my dear madam, replied he, it is the duty of every one; and a duty that agrees with our inclination, to pay attention, where beauty and merit are so conspicuous. You must not be angry with either Townsend or

or myself—I should be extremely happy to introduce you to the ladies of my family. Your situation here must be very lonely."

" You are very obliging, returned Mrs. Fitzowen, but pardon me, if I beg leave to decline that honor. We came hither purposely to live private, and we have reasons for it that are insuperable. That gentleman, pointing to me, met with my daughter last night, by mere accident; he politely rendered us some services, which my lameness made particularly acceptable, as our servant was absent, we feel extremely grateful for the favor, but we must not admit the visits of gentlemen. She spoke in a firm and decisive tone. I thought Eliza looked not quite so severe, but I immediately took the hint, and after expressing my pleasure at finding the young lady had took no cold, wished them a good morning."

" Tankre

" Tankre followed me, and again mounting his horse, said with an oath, she was a crusty old b—h. We parted, and I did not see him again for some time."

In the course of the next week, I ventured to call at Mrs. Fitzowen's again, notwithstanding what she had said. I found her considerably better of her lameness, (which had been occasioned by a fall) and the sweet Eliza received me with a smile. They told me that Miss Wilmot had been with them the day before, and was so extremely pressing for Eliza to return with her to the lodge, that it was with great difficulty she got excused, and not without a promise of paying a visit there very soon."

" I was evidently disconcerted at this intelligence, and my varying countenance betrayed me to the searching eyes of Mrs. Fitzowen, who laid her hand on my arm and with much earnestness, entreated that

I would tell her, without reserve or disguise, what was the real character of Mr. and Mrs. Tankre."

" Of Mrs. Tankre I knew but little, she was quite an invalid, and frequently kept her chamber. Mr. Tankre was a man of the world, that studied his own pleasure, and courted it in almost every shape—he was generous to those who did not presume to thwart his inclinations, and was in general considered as a pleasant companion. Mrs. Fitzowen shook her head, it will not do, Eliza, said she, we must find some excuse to prevent this visit; I fear this neighbourhood is improper for us, and that we shall be obliged to seek another asylum. I assured her that Mr. Tankre's family always returned to town in November, and sometimes earlier, that she could not find a more respectable neighbourhood than the one she had already chose. As I told you before, replied she, we do not wish for acquaint-

ance, our fortune is much too slender to support it, and our pride too great to pay many visits where we cannot make a return."

"Excuse me, Miss Barclay," said the curate, "but I ventured to mention your name, to speak of you (not equal to your merits) but in such terms as made Mrs. Fitzowen acknowledge with a sigh, that it would be happiness indeed to have Eliza recommended to your notice; for, added she, the patronage of an amiable and virtuous woman, would greatly help to protect my daughter from insults of every kind; and yet, Mr. Townsend, how can we, unfriended and unknown, expect such a favor?" I could only assure her again, that you was all goodness and condescension, and that I would mention their situation to you. I have now embraced the first opportunity of so doing, and must leave you to act as you think proper; to acquaint Mr. and Miss Hervey, or not, as
you

you please—but I know you would pity and esteem the gentle Eliza."

Ah, Maria, the curate spoke in a tone and manner that plainly proved he was not uninterested in the fate of the fair Hibernian.

You will readily suppose that my pity was excited, and that I promised to do all I could. Townsend then took his leave, with a serene satisfied countenance and ten thousand thanks.

To Laurentia I imparted every syllable that the curate had uttered, and she immediately consented to accompany me to Mrs. Eitzowen's; in short, we determined to go that very evening. The chaise was ordered, and my uncle (all astonishment) handed us into it.

We stopped before we came to the door, which, from Townsend's description,

was easily distinguished. Mrs. Fitzowen herself came forward to receive us, and Laurentia apologized for intruding on her retirement; mentioned the curate, and told her our names. The poor woman blushed, trembled, and for some moments was at a loss to reply. She then endeavoured to make acknowledgements for our condescension and invited us into the parlour.

Eliza was there, and must have heard all that had passed. Mrs. Fitzowen said, it was almost unnecessary to say, that was her daughter. There was a sweetnes in her countenance that could not fail of interesting. I advanced towards her, and taking her hand, hoped we should be better acquainted. Her eyes spoke far more intelligibly than her tongue.

When we were seated a kind of awkward silence prevailed; we had come thither

ther with benevolent intentions, but we know not how to make them known.

There was an air of dignity in Mrs. Fitzowen, which made Laurentia fearful of offending. However, she at length began, by saying, she felt extremely for the situation of a mother who was left as Mrs. Fitzowen appeared to be, with a daughter, whose education and accomplishments entitled her to respect and attention; but who, from perhaps accidental circumstances, was thus thrown into obscurity, and too often considered by men of the world, as proper objects of their pursuit. Laurentia stopped, and although both mother and daughter assented by a starting tear, to the truth of the remark, yet they seemed unwilling to interrupt her, and she proceeded. — It is very much my wish to render your situation more comfortable; tell me, my dear Madam, how I may best do so? For I greatly fear by offering your daughter an asylum, I may

deprive you of your chief blessing—her company.

Mrs. Fitzowen arose from her chair, her eyes were raised to heaven, she clasped her hands together, and then sat down again. Eliza flew to her mother, “I will not leave you,” said the sweet girl. “Yes,” replied Mrs. Fitzowen, with much emotion, “my gratitude almost overpowered me, you must indeed accept the generous offer of Miss Hervey, I shall see you sometimes, Eliza.” “Nay, then, said Laurentia, who could no longer suppress her tears, “You shall not be parted, I will have you both; and either take Eliza with me now, or leave her here till your affairs are settled, and you can come together to Berry-Wood.”

Not to tire you, Maria, with a repetition of all that passed by way of thanks, it was agreed that Eliza should remain with her mother for the present, and if Mr.

Tankre

Tankre became troublesome by his visits,
she was to be sent to us immediately.

We reached home before it was quite dark, and at supper related the adventure to my uncle, who thought the affair ought to be farther seen into, before they were admitted as members of the family; there was an air of mystery which did not by any means satisfy him, and he said, "Mrs. Fitzowen should explain how she came into such a situation."

Laurentia was surprised that her brother should think any caution necessary; as she had no doubt but unmerited misfortunes had prompted both mother and daughter to retire in disgust from an unfeeling world.

"I do not wish to check benevolent intentions, said my uncle, nor have I any objection to your assisting these people at a distance; but I must still maintain, that

you should know who and what they are, before you make them the companions of yourself and Eglantine—you are both unsuspecting, and therefore more liable to imposition."

Laurentia could not be convinced it was possible for any fraud to exist in the present instance—and so we wished each other good night.

Adieu.

LETTER XVIII.

THE next day we received the following letter, which was addressed to Laurentia.

" Dear Madam,"

" I cannot think of accepting your
" very generous and benevolent offer,
" without

“ without first acquainting you of every
“ part of my history; and notwithstanding
“ I may lay myself open to much censure
“ by revealing my own imprudence: yet,
“ when I have disclosed the unfortunate
“ circumstances that have attended me
“ since, I shall, at least, be certain of ex-
“ citing your pity; and should you at last
“ deem me unworthy your future notice,
“ I trust this letter will be buried in ob-
“ livion, and the unhappy writer soon
“ be forgotten.”

“ 'Tis perhaps necessary to say, I am a
“ native of Ireland. My father was a
“ gentleman, and held an advantageous
“ place under the Earl of ——, when
“ he was Lord Lieutenant of that King-
“ dom. My own mother died soon after
“ I was born, and my father having mar-
“ ried again, had a large family by his
“ second wife. I soon began to experi-
“ ence the disagreeable effects of the par-
“ tiality my mother-in-law always shewed

“ to her own children; yet my father was
“ just enough not to make any difference
“ in our education.”

“ We had a governess in the house, and
“ masters to attend us at home. My ap-
“ titude to learn gave me a superiority
“ over Harriot, my next sister, (who was
“ not more than two years younger than
“ myself) that greatly displeased our
“ mother; and Mrs. Maxwell (our go-
“ verness) by way of ingratiating herself
“ into favor, endeavoured to keep me as
“ backward as possible.”

“ As I grew older, I became every
“ day more sensible, how much depended
“ on my own exertions; and how little
“ I had to expect from the good offices of
“ others; yet the families that visited us
“ were particularly civil to me, though it
“ was very apparent that I was neglected
“ by my mother, who never suffered me

“ to

“ to be so well dressed as her own daughters.”

“ Soon after I was turned of fifteen, a
“ Mr. and Mrs. Charnock, who had
“ always expressed a friendship for me,
“ (from the knowledge they had of my
“ own mother) were very urgent with my
“ father to let me accompany them to
“ England, where they proposed spending
“ the winter.”

“ This request being granted, I prepared for my journey with heart-felt satisfaction; and left home without experiencing that tender regret, which is so natural to young people, when they first part from their parents, or those who have had the charge of their infancy.”

“ The Charnocks were possessed of a very large fortune; they were of the

“ Romish persuasion, but their zeal was
“ supposed to be moderate.”

“ M. Celon, a frenchman, resided con-
“ stantly in the family, and acted in the
“ capacity of priest — he attended us to
“ England, and was consulted on every
“ occasion. During our residence in
“ London, I was the happiest of human
“ beings. Freed from the mortifications
“ and disappointments I had been forced
“ to sustain, (I may say) from my cradle,
“ the contrast afforded me double satis-
“ faction. Mrs. Charnock was fond of
“ pleasure, and made a point of taking
“ me to every place of public diversion;
“ perhaps she was not sorry to have that
“ excuse, as her husband was of a more
“ retired disposition, and frequently ex-
“ cused himself from being of our par-
“ ties.”

“ As I have been long past my prime,
“ and have quite relinquished the world,
“ you

" you will perhaps excuse my vanity if
" I say, my figure was once attractive,
" and the flattering attention I received
" in all companies not a little contributed
" to increase that vanity. However,
when the time arrived that was fixed for
our return to Ireland, I was still in pos-
session of my heart, which had remained
untouched amidst all the busy and be-
witching scenes I had engaged in."

Mrs. Charnock was become too fond
to think of parting with me; she still
detained me at a seat of theirs, a few
miles from Dublin, and the sudden
death of my father, occasioned her to
make me the offer of living constantly
with them.

My own mother's fortune was £2000
which had been settled so, that I came
into the immediate possession of it on
the decease of my father.

" My

“ My mother-in-law and her children
“ were not so well provided for, having
“ lived nearly up to their income; but
“ having relations in Scotland, from
“ whom they had some expectations,
“ they left Ireland as soon as their affairs
“ were settled, and went to reside near
“ Glasgow.”

“ It will not be supposed that my grief
“ was very immoderate, or lasted very
“ long from this event. I had loved my
“ father, and was greatly shocked on re-
“ ceiving the account of his death; but
“ it soon wore off, and my natural vivacity
“ city returned.”

“ I continued in the same situation
“ rather more than two years, without
“ any circumstance occurring that is
“ worth the relation.”

“ M. Celon then paid the debt of
“ nature, and made room for a young
“ man.

“ man named Carrol, who was received
“ into the house, and introduced to all
“ the neighbouring families as a physician;
“ at the same time he officiated at mass.
“ His person was handsome, and he had
“ received every advantage that a good
“ education, improved by travelling
“ could give; his manner appeared to
“ me fascinating beyond what I had ever
“ met with before. In a very short time
“ I felt uneasy at his absence, and anxious
“ to obtain his approbation.”

“ I was nominally a protestant, but had
“ never made religion any part of my
“ study. When very young I had been
“ sometimes at church with my sisters,
“ and had likewise been told that it would
“ be wicked to turn Roman Catholic.
“ But I had not seriously considered the
“ subject. — 'Tis true, Mrs. Charnock
“ had at times talked to me on the neces-
“ sity of being received into their church;
“ and that salvation belonged to no other;
“ but

" but our conversations were generally
" interrupted, or rather changed, by a
" dissertation on dress, or some new
" scheme for a party of pleasure, and as
" I had frequently been present at mas,.
" and entirely neglected going to any
" other place of public worship; perhaps
" she thought the slight prejudices I had
" received in my education would insen-
" sibly wear off, and therefore it was not
" worth while to importune me on the
" subject; but after Dr. Carrol had been
" with us a few months, Mrs. Charnock
" gave him a hint, to have a little talk
" with me in private; expecting that his
" reasons would have more weight with
" me than hers."

" Alas! Carrol was too experienced —
" too much a man of the world not to
" avail himself of these opportunities;
" and instead of endeavouring to set my
" affections on things above, he took un-
" common pains to make them centre
" in

“ in himself. He soon began to plead
“ the cruelty of his situation, calling him-
“ self wretched in the extreme—his heart
“ was fallen a sacrifice to my charms,
“ and yet he was forbidden to ask my
“ hand, he only entreated my compassion,
“ he dared not hope for my love.”

“ This pretended misery was infectious;
“ my vivacity forsook me—I became as
“ wretched as he was. The serious turn
“ of my countenance after these little
“ private conversations, and the pensiveness
“ of my aspect, was mistaken by
“ the Charnocks for the effect, which the
“ arguments of Dr. Carrol had made on
“ my mind; and they flattered themselves
“ I should very soon become a convert—
“ and so I did—but not to the force of
“ religious truths. The artful priest at
“ length persuaded me, that if I would
“ consent to a private marriage, and faith-
“ fully keep the secret, 'till he came in
“ possession of a large fortune, (which he
“ was

“ was in daily expectation of from the
“ death of an uncle) he himself would
“ abjure the Romish religion, and pub-
“ licly own me as his wife.”

“ Blind to the improbability of such an
“ event, and borne away by the ardency
“ of my affection for him, in a fatal mo-
“ ment I yielded to his repeated entre-
“ ties, and promised to be entirely guided
“ by his directions.”

“ Ah! my dear Madam, can you find
“ any palliation for my conduct? Can
“ you forgive the wretch who thus con-
“ fented to an unlawful marriage, and
“ forgot what she owed to her best friend?
“ Will your goodness allow me to plead
“ youth and inexperience? I judged the
“ hearts of others by my own, and it
“ never knew deceit, 'till painfully taught
“ by Carrol. — Perhaps the arguments
“ made use of by him, have been repeated
“ to a thousand unguarded victims be-
“ fore,

“ fore. My fatal partiality and mis-
“ placed confidence alone prevented me
“ from perceiving the sophistry of them.”

“ I had never contracted a friendship
“ with any one of my own age; I knew
“ not a creature to whom I might un-
“ bosom myself, and by their advice been
“ warned of my danger — for I will not
“ pretend to deny, but that at the very
“ time I feared I was wrong; yet so pow-
“ erful was the ascendency Carrol had
“ acquired over me, that I had not reso-
“ lution to withstand his fond persua-
“ sions.”

“ It was agreed between us that the
“ ceremony should take place at a neigh-
“ bouring village. Carrol was to engage
“ a clergyman, in whom, he assured me,
“ we might place unlimited confidence.”

“ The evening preceding the day fixed
“ for this purpose, I asked Mr. Charnock
“ to

to spare me a man and two horses, to go
“ to Dublin the next morning, as I wished
“ to see an old servant of my father’s
“ that was lately married, and I had some
“ trifles to give her towards house-keep-
“ ing. No objections being made, Car-
“ rol immediately started and said, talk-
“ ing of Dublin put him in mind of an
“ engagement he had for that very even-
“ ing; having promised to meet a gen-
“ tleman on business, which had unfor-
“ tunately escaped his memory till that
“ moment. What could he do? ’Twas
“ only five miles, and a fine night, he
“ thought he might venture to walk.—
“ Mr. Charnock rung the bell, and
“ ordered a horse to be saddled instantly.
“ Carroll thanked him, and said, perhaps
“ he should not be at home very early
“ the next day.”

“ ’Tis impossible to describe what passed
“ in my bosom while this short conver-
“ sation lasted. My mind misgave me;
“ and

" and I was on the point of discovering
" the whole affair to Mrs. Charnock,
" (who was readily promoting our scheme,
" little thinking of the ruin that await-
" ed me) but I was withheld by some
" malignant power; a false shame sealed
" my lips, and when I cast my eyes to-
" wards the man that was plotting my
" destruction, his fine person and eloquent
" countenance spoke ten thousand tender
" things in his behalf. He bid us adieu,
" and as he left the room said, I shall very
" probably see you, Miss Fitzowen, in
" Dublin, to-morrow."

" Mr. Charnock had a political pam-
" phlet in his hand, his eyes were tired
" with reading, yet he wished to know
" how it would conclude. 'Sophia,' said
" he, 'do finish it for me.' I took the
" book and read a few sentences. 'I do
" not understand you, my dear, read that
" last passage over again.' Nothing could
" have been interesting to me at that
" time

" time, or have entirely engaged my attention; but the dry subject of politics was the least of all calculated to steal a single thought from the important event of the morrow. I acquitted myself so ill, that the good man's patience was exhausted; and he could not help exclaiming, with some degree of pevishness, 'Women can read nothing well but Plays and Novels.'

" I retired to my chamber under much perturbation—sleep would not befriend me; and when the grey dawn approached, I was still imploring the aid of gentle slumbers, but implored in vain—notwithstanding which, I remained in bed 'till near nine o'clock, and went down to breakfast dis-spirited and sad."

" Mrs. Charnock observed I did not look well, but concluded, a ride would be of service; and desired me not to

" hurry

“ hurry myself, as the horses would not
“ be wanted ; and I might, if I pleased,
“ keep them 'till the evening.”

“ Not one circumstance occurred to
“ raise a difficulty in my way, and by
“ postponing give me time to recover
“ myself.”

“ When I arrived at the house of Susan
“ Price, (the servant I before mentioned)
“ I dismounted, and ordered the man who
“ attended me, to go to an inn with the
“ horses, and I would send to him when
“ I wished to return.”

“ In about half an hour Carrol came,
“ and telling Susan that I would eat a
“ mutton chop with her at three o'clock,
“ being engaged 'till that time, she ap-
“ peared well satisfied, and highly pleased
“ with the supposed honor.”

“ I

“ We walked out of the city, a chaise
“ was waiting, which drove us to P—,
“ and stopped at a very old house; indeed
“ it had scarce the appearance of being
“ inhabited—yet there it was that the pre-
“ tended clergyman, the friend of Carrol,
“ waited to receive us. The bare re-
“ membrance of that place, even now,
“ makes me shudder with horror.”

“ I was handed out of the carriage, and
“ conducted into a large room, miserably
“ furnished ; the clergyman was intro-
“ duced to me, as a Mr. Haly — he was
“ young, and rather handsome than other-
“ wise : an old woman likewise attended.
“ A prayer-book being produced, Mr.
“ Haly was going to begin the marriage
“ ceremony, I stopped him, and expressed
“ my surprize at such proceeding, for I
“ had been led to expect that I was to
“ be married in a regular way, at church,
“ nor had I any idea that we stopped at
“ that

“ that house for any other purpose than to
“ wait 'till every thing was ready.”

“ I was then assured by both Carrol and
“ Haly, that it was impossible—the risque
“ would be too great, and that our mar-
“ riage in the place we then were, would
“ be just the same in the eyes of Heaven,
“ as if performed in a church; I should
“ have a certificate from Haly, and the
“ moment Carrol became an independent
“ man, if I wished it, he would marry me
“ again, in the face of the whole world.”

“ I had gone too far to retract, and
“ really plighted my vows with heart-felt
“ sincerity to the man who was triumph-
“ ing in my credulity.”

“ The old woman officiated as father,
“ and gave me away, and afterwards wished
“ me a happiness I never really enjoyed;
“ for although it was some time before I
“ was fully aware of the deplorable situ-

“ action I had thrown myself into, yet I
“ was ever uneasy at the secret I had
“ sworn to keep; and miserably anxious
“ for the time to arrive, when I might
“ safely disclose it.”

“ We returned to Dublin before the
“ expiration of the time appointed, staid
“ a couple of hours at Susan's, and rode
“ home together.”

“ No questions were asked, but those I
“ was enabled to answer with truth; and
“ Mrs. Charnock complimented me on
“ the difference of my morning and even-
“ ing countenance. Alas! conscious of
“ my imprudence, my face was lighted
“ up (if I may so express myself) with a
“ flush between innocence and guilt, and
“ her noticing it, only added still deeper
“ tints.”

“ A few weeks reconciled me in some
“ degree, and I became tolerably cheer-
“ ful, though by no means happy.”

“ Carroll’s behaviour, when we were
“ alone, was tender and affectionate ; be-
“ fore company, and even in the presence
“ of Mr. and Mrs. Charnock he was
“ more distant than formerly — he, how-
“ ever, could easily persuade me to think
“ he was perfectly right, whatever mode
“ of conduct he might chuse to adopt in
“ public — so long as I was convinced I
“ possessed his affections I was con-
“ tented.”

“ I had been a wife several months
“ before I perceived that inconvenience
“ which attends private marriages, and
“ which awakened in my bosom the most
“ painful sensations. I consulted with
“ Carroll, who seemed distressed, but after
“ a pause, he entreated me to be per-
“ fectly easy, as he would consider and
“ form some plan to effectually save me
“ from disgrace. Very soon after he gave
“ me to understand, that Mr. and Mrs.
“ Charnock had an inclination to visit

“ Italy, and if he could prevail on them
“ to finally determine on that scheme, it
“ would be easy for me to find an excuse
“ to remain in Ireland during their ab-
“ sence; that I might retire to some vil-
“ lage, and be taken proper care of 'till it
“ was safe for me to appear in public
“ again.”

“ Anxious days and weary nights suc-
“ ceeded each other; I could not fix on
“ any scheme that gave relief to my tor-
“ tured imagination; I could form no
“ plausible pretext to be left behind, when
“ the Italian tour was talked of. My
“ situation became every day more con-
“ spicuous, and I only wondered it was
“ not perceived by Mrs. Charnock.”

“ Several little circumstances contri-
“ buted to prevent the intended tour from
“ taking place at the time Carrol ex-
“ pected; and it was at last agreed to be
“ deferred 'till a time, which I knew must
“ infallibly

“ infallibly proclaim what I was so solicitous to conceal. I well knew, that if I betrayed the author of my distress, his ruin must be inevitable; and to bear the shame of becoming a mother without daring to own a husband, was hard. Yet I determined to leave my friends, and submit to whatever constructions they might put on my flight; thinking, that if the Charnocks should refuse to receive me again, I had a small independency that would save me from want.”

“ Excusing myself, therefore, from going with the family to pay a dinner visit, at some distance, I employed the time at home in packing up what I conceived would be most necessary, and then wrote a note to Susan Price, desiring her to send a chaise to Mr. Charnock's immediately. I added, no time was to be lost, for my future happiness

" depended on my getting away that
" evening—I should explain farther par-
" ticulars when we met."

" I likewise left a note for Mrs. Char-
" nock, intimating that it would be some
" time before she saw me again, and re-
" questing her to suspend her judgment
" (strange as my conduct might appear)
" 'till I was at liberty to exculpate myself.
" Moments seemed ages 'till the chaise
" arrived. When it came, I was irresolute,
" and could scarcely summon courage to
" go. One of the servants offered to
" attend me, but I refused, and with
" trembling limbs stepped into the chaise.

" I drove to Sufan's house, and en-
" quired if she could accommodate me
" with lodging for one night, as I should
" leave Dublin the next morning. Being
" answered in the affirmative, provided I
" could put up with homely fare. I
" went in, and calling the good creature
" aside,

“ aside, imparted the fatal secret, con-
“ cealing only the name of my husband.
“ I conjured her to think for and assist
“ me, promising to reward her liberally
“ if she was faithful in my service. She
“ agreed to what I proposed, but could
“ form no plan herself. I sent her in the
“ morning to order a chaise to wait for
“ us without the town, and disguising
“ myself as much as I possibly could by
“ dress, I walked to it, accompanied by
“ Susan. We desired the driver to go on
“ to a village in the neighbourhood, and
“ stop at a small public house, which
“ I had noticed for neatness as I rode by
“ it some months before — there we dis-
“ charged the chaise, and Susan sallied
“ forth to try if she could find any place
“ that was likely to suit our purpose.”

“ I waited her return with much
“ anxiety — she came at last, and had been
“ at least successful in hearing of one ; it
“ was three miles from where we then

“ were, and situated at a distance from any
“ other house. An old woman, who had
“ lately buried her husband, lived in it,
“ she had likewise two daughters with
“ her, and as their circumstances were
“ not flourishing, it was supposed they
“ would be glad to take a lodger.”

“ Thither I at once I determined to
“ go, but it was too far to walk; a horse
“ was the only conveyance we could pro-
“ cure. I mounted, and Susan walked
“ by my side. The old woman, whose
“ name was Mac Lean, received us very
“ civilly, and being informed of our busi-
“ ness, readily consented to all I required.
“ She could spare me a chamber to my-
“ self, as her girls might sleep with her;
“ and she gave me choice of the only two
“ that were furnished — for the house was
“ old, and had more rooms in it than
“ Mrs. Mac Lean made use of — she like-
“ wise undertook to nurse me.”

“ Susan

“ Susan went home after dinner, and
“ was to send my cloaths, which were left
“ at her house, promising to visit me as
“ often as she could, without raising sus-
“ picion.”

“ I had not been in that melancholy
“ retirement more than five days before
“ I became a mother, assisted by no hu-
“ man being, but Mrs. Mac Lean and
“ the two young women.”

“ The moment I was able to hold a
“ pen, I wrote to Carrol, informing him
“ he had a daughter; and I described,
“ with all the fondness of a mother, the
“ beauties of my sweet infant. I intreated,
“ to hear from, and if possible, to see
“ him, to know how my flight was con-
“ strued; and told him, how he might
“ send to me. When Susan came, I gave
“ her the letter, with direction, to get
“ it delivered privately to Dr. Carrol,
“ who I expected would be my friend,

“ and intercede with Mrs. Charnock for
“ me, if he found she was displeased with
“ my conduct.”

“ To that letter I never had any an-
“ swer, and soon after was forced to
“ sustain the mortification of hearing (by
“ Susan) that Mr. and Mrs. Charnock
“ accompanied by Carrol, were abso-
“ lutely set out for the continent — no
“ time fixed for their return, and servants
“ left at board wages.”

“ Shocked beyond measure at this in-
“ telligence, the anxiety of my mind
“ threw me into a fever, from which it
“ however, pleased Heaven to recover
“ me.”

“ Before I ventured down stairs, a gen-
“ tleman earnestly requested to see me.
“ I had taken the name of Browne, and
“ being enquired for by that name, I in-
“ stantly concluded it must be some friend
“ of

“ of my husband’s, to whom he had
“ communicated it, and who was now
“ come to bring me a letter, or inform-
“ ation of him. I therefore ordered the
“ stranger to be admitted, and immedi-
“ ately recollect ed the clergyman who
“ had married us. — My features
“ flushed with joy at seeing him. His
“ countenance was expressive of feeling;
“ he advanced, and in a low voice said,
“ it gave him great concern to be the
“ messenger of any thing that would be
“ disagreeable to me, or for one moment
“ overcast the sweet serenity of my face.
“ I answered not, but listened attentively.
“ He seated himself near me, supposed I
“ had heard that the Charnocks were
“ gone to Italy. Carrol was ungrateful,
“ and went with them; ’twas hardly pro-
“ bable I should see them again.”

“ Mrs. Charnock had suspected the
“ motive of my abrupt departure, and
“ never having perceived that I was par-

“ ticularly attached to any gentleman,
“ she had hastily concluded, I had per-
“ mitted the familiarity of servants, and
“ as hastily declared, such uncommon
“ depravity should never enter her house
“ any more—nor indeed was it expected
“ they would return to Ireland for some
“ few years.”

“ Situated as I then was, the thoughts
“ of not seeing Mrs. Charnock again, was
“ by no means grievous to me. I was so
“ doatingly fond of my little Eliza, that
“ I could never have prevailed on myself
“ to leave her, could I have been re-
“ instated in my former situation; with-
“ out the slightest suspicion (of the reason
“ why I had quitted it) ever being hinted
“ at by my acquaintance. That consider-
“ ation enabled me to bear, what other-
“ wise must have deprived me of my
“ senses.”

“ But

“ But ‘have you no letter, no message
“ from my husband?’ exclaimed I. ‘Alas:
“ none.’ — We were both silent. — The
“ wretch took my hand, and dropping on
“ one knee, ‘Carrol is unworthy of you—
“ Forgive me, most lovely Sophia, I too
“ have been accessory to your ruin; but
“ if you can pardon, my future life shall
“ be dedicated to your will, it shall indeed
“ atone for the wrong I have done you.
“ Carrol persuaded me to personate a cler-
“ gyman.’ ‘And are you not one,’ inter-
“ rupted I. ‘I am, unfortunately, in the
“ same predicament that he was, returned
“ he, but oh, do me the justice to be-
“ lieve, I am incapable of acting as he
“ has done — seducing innocence and
“ then deserting it!’

“ Oh, you are capable of any thing;
“ retorted I, if you could knowingly
“ assist in such a base plot; nor could you
“ propose any advantage to yourself from
“ my

“ my misery—misery which I must now
“ sustain for the remainder of my life.”

“ In short, Madam, I by degrees be-
“ came acquainted with the extent of
“ Carroll's villainy. 'Twas he that per-
“ suaded Mrs. Charnock to believe, that
“ one of her servants was the father of my
“ infant. 'Twas he that persuaded them
“ to leave Ireland; and no doubt, conti-
“ nually incensed them against me.”

“ Haly knew all, and supposed (from
“ his own corrupt heart) that I should
“ consent to receive his visits. — Re-
“ proaches and tears were plentifully
“ bestowed on this vile abettor of my
“ shame, (for he told me, that even the
“ certificate of my false marriage had
“ been stolen from me by Carroll.) I
“ declared, if he did not instantly depart,
“ or if he ever dared to attempt seeing
“ me again, I would publish my story to
“ all the world, and effectually expose
“ the

“ the practices of him and his wicked
“ companion.”

“ After trying every argument which
“ he thought might sooth, and finding
“ them ineffectual, he took himself away;
“ nor did he ever trouble me more after
“ he had received a denial from Mrs.
“ Mac Lean, (according to my direction)
“ who refused him admittance, on his
“ once attempting to come into the
“ house. I resolved to continue in ob-
“ scurity, and to dedicate my time and
“ attention to my child, to educate her
“ (as far as I was able) and to store her
“ mind with better precepts than had
“ been instilled into mine.”

“ The £2,000 (I before mentioned)
“ was at interest at 5 per Cent. I had
“ likewise saved some money, which
“ more than defrayed the extraordinary
“ expences I had lately been at. I there-
“ fore furnished another room in Mrs.
“ Mac

“ Mac Lean’s house, and sent for the rest
“ of my cloaths and books (which Mrs.
“ Charnock had ordered I should have if
“ I demanded.) I had leisure for every
“ thing, and heartily repented of my im-
“ discretion — yet I was really happier,
“ more composed and resigned, than I
“ had ever been since my first acquaint-
“ ance with Carrol had commenced.”

“ I remained ten years a lodger of Mrs.
“ Mac Lean’s, and had the satisfaction of
“ observing every improvement in my
“ daughter, that I could possibly hope for
“ in such a situation.”

“ I had lived very frugally and never
“ quite expended my income, laying by
“ a little every year, in order to purchase
“ future advantages for Eliza.”

“ The Charnocks had been once in
“ Ireland, during that period, but made
“ only a short stay; — they called on Susan
“ Price

“ Price to enquire what was become of
“ me—she obeyed my instructions, and
“ gave them no satisfactory answer.”

“ In ten years I hoped my story would
“ be forgotten, (which it is natural to
“ suppose made some talk at the time)
“ and for the sake of my girl, I took
“ lodgings in Dublin, sending her to a
“ good day-school, that she might have
“ an opportunity of learning to dance. I
“ still kept very private, nor once at-
“ tempted to gain any acquaintance.”

“ The change was of advantage to
“ Eliza, whose manners gradually po-
“ lished as she associated with other
“ children. A fit of illness when she was
“ fourteen, determined me to again settle
“ in the country.”

“ I accordingly removed to a village,
“ where I had comfortable apartments,
“ and

“ and where my dear girl’s health was
“ soon re-established.”

“ A few genteel families in that neighbour hood began to notice us at church,
“ and in time called at our lodgings, and
“ invited us to their houses. Eliza’s per-
“ son was admired, and I trembled with
“ apprehension whenever she was parti-
“ cularised by any gentlemen, yet I could
“ not constantly refuse the invitations we
“ received.”

“ A Mr. Bevan, who was nephew to
“ an old lady that had been very civil to
“ us, began to call oftener than I liked;
“ I could not hope that he would marry
“ my daughter, and I was afraid he might
“ embitter her future peace, by engaging
“ her affections. She was turned seven-
“ teen—’twas a dangerous age. I had no
“ method of extricating myself, and
“ saving her, but by leaving the place.
“ Hearing that Mr. Charnock was dead,
“ and

" and his widow returning to Ireland,
" accompanied by Dr. Carrol, who had
" acquired such an influence over her,
" that every thing was conducted accord-
" ing to his will — made me still more
" determined to quit my situation and we
" concluded on coming to England, and
" if we found it agreeable, to finally settle
" there."

" We arrived in London, where I
" had made a very different figure some
" years before. I did not remain there
" long, but was recommended to the
" cottage I now occupy by a respectable
" tradesman, whom I applied to. Here
" we have been some months, and illness
" had confined us at home 'till the even-
" ing Eliza met with Mr. Townsend;
" from which time you have already
" been acquainted with every circum-
" stance that has befel us. And I have
" now only to pray that I may not, by
" thus satisfying the scruples of my own
" conscience,

“ conscience, give you reason to judge
“ me utterly unworthy of that patronage
“ you offered us before you knew our
“ history.”

“ Condescend at least to honor us with
“ your advice, for by only pointing out
“ a path, in which we might walk with
“ some degree of safety, you would for-
“ ever endear your memory to the un-
“ fortunate, and claim our daily prayers.
“ 'Tis an obligation that could never be
“ forgotten by,

“ Dear Madam,

“ Your already obliged, and most
“ grateful humble Servant,

“ SOPHIA FITZOWEN.”

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

THE greater part of Mrs. Fitzowen's letter being read to my uncle, occasioned some animadversions, not much in favor of the Romish clergy; and however he might in reality pity the situation of that lady, he discovered no inclination for her company at Berrywood. But observing the unwillingness of Laurentia to give up any plan she had once formed, he proposed fitting up a small house, that is situated at the extremity of the wood, which for a trifling expence might be made very comfortable; and the people who are now in it, as well accommodated elsewhere; they having leave only to make use of it for a short time.

"Twas

'Twas a scheme that gave satisfaction to both, as we could then see Eliza every day if we pleased. But then it could not be effected in a moment, and Laurentia was impatient 'till she had done something to contribute to their comfort. Orders were however immediately given, and an answer sent to Mrs. Fitzowen's letter, in which the offer of the house was made. She accepted it with grateful joy.

I know not but the ardor with which Laurentia engages in this affair, and the pleasure she apparently takes, in endeavouring to give every thing about this said house the appearance of neatness and gentility, may be of service to her, and by diverting her mind, be the means of restoring her health.

We have paid another visit to Mrs. Fitzowen's cottage, and carried both her and Eliza to see their new habitation.—The delight which sparkled in their eyes

on

on beholding such a pretty place, and knowing that they were to be so near to us, may be better conceived than described—they said every thing that ought to be said to testify their gratitude, but they felt too much to be very prolix in their professions.

On our return, my uncle met us with a smile, saying “I have a stranger to present, but I hope his appearance will not agitate my sister — it is one she always esteemed, and whose fate she had long been ignorant of.” “Is it possible? Can it be Louis Darnley? Gracious heavens! Where is he?” Exclaimed Laurentia, in one breath, she could utter no more—the remembrance of what had passed almost overpowered her; she sprung into the parlour, sunk into the first chair, and again asked, “Where is he?”

We were at first rather alarmed at her manner, but she soon recovered herself
and

and became perfectly calm. My uncle wished she would not see Darnley (for it was really him) just at present. She acquiesced, and retired to dress for dinner.

The moment Laurentia's back was turned, I intreated to be introduced to my old friend, for though I had no personal recollection of him, his attention during my childhood, now merited my thanks.

My uncle led me into the library, where he had absolutely locked up Darnley, who rose at our entrance, and who was evidently disappointed in the object presented—yet, recovering himself with a tolerable grace, he paid some compliments on the improvement of my person, which are not proper to be repeated. He looked pale and emaciated, but his eyes are uncommonly fine; and when I told him he would see Laurentia (on his asking about

about her) at dinner, I thought his countenance assumed a more cheerful aspect.

When they really met, I was astonished at Laurentia's composure, for she received Darnley with a friendly warmth, but without any visible emotion. I cannot but think she did herself some violence on the occasion — however she was certainly right in so doing.

While the servants were in waiting, the conversation was (of course) general; but when they withdrew, and the cloth was removed, Laurentia could no longer suppress her desire to be informed, how Darnley had passed his time since he left England. She began, by remarking, that "He must have been a spectator of various scenes since she saw him last; and she hoped few were of so melancholy a nature as those he had witnessed in her family."

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Darnley replied, "Perhaps it might have the appearance of ingratitude to let his situation remain so long secret to a family, from whom he had received such great and repeated favors; yet his heart acquitted him of being intentionally guilty of so great a crime; — for no length of time, or variety of climate, could ever obliterate from his mind the deepest sense of his obligations."

" After the change, said he, that took
" place on the death of my dear and ho-
" nored friend, the colonel, I determined
" not to rob his family of all that his ge-
" nerous and noble spirit had bequeathed
" me. Sensible that I had long been
" an almost useless member of society,
" and suffered those talents to lie dor-
" mant that nature had given me — I
" thought it high time to exert myself,
" and when Mr. Gregory Hervey paid
" me my legacy, and something in ad-
" vance of the annuity, I resolved that
" nothing

“ nothing but the most extreme distress
“ should ever compel me to accept of
“ any more.”

“ I soon found that Italy would not do
“ for me, my connexions were not of a
“ nature to bring me forward in the line
“ I most wished; and several disagreeable
“ circumstances in my father’s family
“ not a little contributed to encrease my
“ chagrin.”

“ I had acquired in England a taste
“ for elegance and domestic comfort.—
“ Alas! they were not to be met with in
“ a land of slavery, where the lower sort
“ of people are ignorant and supersti-
“ tious, the constant dupes of priesthood,
“ and vassals of the great; and where the
“ higher ranks in life are haughty and
“ dissolute, wholly given up to pleasure.”

“ But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
“ And sensual bliss is all that nation knows.

“ In florid beauty groves and fields appear,
“ Men seem the only growth that dwindleth there.
“ Contrasted faults thro’ all their manners reign,
“ Tho’ poor, luxurious; tho’ submissive, vain:
“ Tho’ grave, yet trifling—zealous, yet untrue;
“ And e’en in penance, planing sins anew.”

GOLDSMITH.

“ I staid but a few months there, gave
“ the greater part of Colonel Hervey’s
“ bounty to assist my brothers and sisters,
“ reserving only what I conceived would
“ be necessary to defray the expences of
“ an East India Voyage, and support me
“ for some months after I should arrive
“ at Bengal; by that means putting it
“ out of my power to remain inactive or
“ idle.”

“ Fortune was propitious. In going
“ over I got acquainted with people of
“ some consequence, who were passen-
“ gers in the same ship. From the cap-
“ tain

“ tain I likewise received many civilities,
“ and was no sooner landed than my new
“ friends made a point of recommending
“ me to others, who in their turn helped
“ me forward; so that I had very soon suf-
“ ficient employment, for which I was
“ liberally rewarded, even beyond my most
“ sanguine expectations; and I perceived
“ it would be my own fault if I did not
“ make a fortune.”

“ To acquire an independence was all
“ I aimed at, and that in a short time
“ Providence enabled me to do.”

“ But still I remained in India some
“ years after my desires (in that way)
“ were amply gratified; yet I was not
“ suffered to be idle. My friends were
“ importunate, and obliged me to exer-
“ cise my art, making me very handsome
“ presents for what they then considered
“ as an obligation.”

“ I had indeed but few inducements to
“ leave a country, where I had acquired
“ so many friends. My native land had
“ no charms for me, and in England I
“ despained of happiness, because I feared
“ it was denied to your family. I should
“ therefore most probably have ended
“ my days on the banks of the Ganges,
“ had I not had an opportunity of being
“ serviceable to two very amiable young
“ women, by again visiting this island.”

“ They were the daughters of an
“ English gentleman (a Mr. Clever) who
“ had been formerly in India, but whose
“ health did not permit him to stay long
“ enough to realize a fortune. They had
“ been well educated, and indeed brought
“ up in a much higher style than their
“ future prospects in life warranted.—
“ They had embarked with their mother,
“ who had expended her all to pay for
“ their passage, and fit out her daugh-
“ ters

"ters to the best advantage. But she,
" poor woman, died on the voyage."

" The young ladies were consigned to
" the care of Mr. Roberts, (a gentleman
" to whom I was under many obligations,
" and whose house I happened to be at
" when they first landed.) He had been
" an intimate friend of their father's, and
" they were to be disposed of in the ma-
" trimonial way according to his discre-
" tion."

" The countenance of Miss Clever
" bespoke a mind ill at ease, and Amelia
" (the youngest) seemed so affectionately
" attached to her sister, that she perfectly
" sympathized in every thing that dis-
" tressed or gave Harriot pain."

" Their persons were elegant, but could
" not be called beautiful, yet their affa-
" bility and sweetness impressed every

" one with a favorable idea of their dif-
" positions."

" Miss Clever expressed the greatest
" repugnance whenever any gentleman
" was named as a proper husband for her.
" She declared, she never could be happy
" in such a connexion, without having
" time to observe the temper and incli-
" nations of the man, to whom she was
" to vow perpetual obedience."

" Amelia coincided in sentiment with
" her sister, and my friend, Mr. Roberts,
" apprehended he should have more trou-
" ble in settling them, than is usually
" given by ladies who go to the India
" markets."

" My compassion was soon excited on
" their account, for I easily perceived
" there was something more than grief
" for the loss of their mother, that occa-
" sioned those tears I was sometimes wit-
" ness

"ness to ;—and I really thought Miss Clever would have fainted, on Mr. Layton, (a gentleman of immense fortune) being introduced to her — she complained of a pain in her head, and retired as soon as possible ; nor could Amelia be detained one moment after her sister."

" The next day Mr. Roberts had business, that occasioned his absence for several hours, and I took an opportunity (after apologising for such a freedom) to intimate to Harriot, that I suspected some previous attachment gave rise to that extreme reluctance, she ever discovered to receive the addresses of the gentlemen in the East ; if I guessed right, and she thought me worthy her confidence, I would render her every service in my power ; as perhaps her delicacy might be hurt at the idea of making a confession of the kind I hinted at, to Mr. Roberts, who, though

“ possessed of many valuable qualities,
“ had not that softness of disposition so
“ necessary to conduct affairs of the ma-
“ trimonial kind, to the satisfaction of an
“ amiable and sensible woman.”

“ She looked at me with astonishment,
“ but her eyes brightened as she gazed,
“ and after a short silence, she thus ex-
“ pressed herself.”

“ To meet with a disinterested friend
“ on this side the Atlantic, is more, much
“ more than I dared to hope. Yet I am
“ sure I may believe you; and even to
“ open my mind, may perhaps be a re-
“ lief, although you have it not in your
“ power to fulfil the offer you have so
“ generously made. It is impossible for
“ me to be happy in India — little less
“ than force could ever have compelled
“ me to leave England : Even had I no
“ attachments there that detained my af-
“ fections, the bare idea of setting myself
“ out

" out to sale, and accepting the best
" bidder, shocks my delicacy more than
" I can describe."

" I will inform you of every particular
" respecting myself, and begin with tell-
" ing you, that I was educated in a large
" school near London, while Amelia was
" brought up more immediately under
" her mother's eye; and during my fa-
" ther's stay in India, they both spent the
" greater part of their time with an old
" lady, a distant relation, who is since
" dead, but from whom we reaped no fur-
" ther advantage."

" At school I formed a friendship with
" Louisa Merton, whose father held an
" advantageous place under government,
" and whose views respecting his chil-
" dren, were far greater than I fear will
" be ever realised."

“ I frequently spent the holidays at
“ Kensington, where Mr. Merton had a
“ handsome house, in which his family
“ constantly resided.”

“ Louisa was the only daughter, but
“ she had four brothers, three of whom
“ were older than herself. Philip, the
“ second son, being of a studious turn,
“ was very much at home, and very im-
“ portunate with his father to consent that
“ he should take orders; but Mr. Merton
“ had intended him for the army, where
“ his friends had great interest; and when
“ he found that the inclinations of his son
“ corresponded so little with his own, it
“ gave him such a disgust to the youth,
“ that not all the great merit of Philip,
“ and, in every other respect, ready com-
“ pliance with the will of his father, could
“ ever restore him to favor.”

“ Louisa was his only comfort, and from
“ her I was continually informed of all his
“ troubles—

“ troubles—indeed he was generally of our
“ little parties, and constantly attended us
“ when we walked out.”

“ By degrees my young heart began
“ to experience a softer sensation than
“ pity for this amiable youth, and when
“ I quitted school intirely, (which was on
“ the arrival of my father in England) I
“ still kept up the acquaintance.”

“ Mrs. Merton dying soon after, the
“ grief of Louisa required the soothing
“ aid of friendship, and I was requested
“ to spend some months with her, 'till the
“ first emotions should subside.”

“ Philip had been entered at Oxford,
“ but it happening to be the vacation, he
“ was at home, when I again returned to
“ Kensington, to comfort my friend.—
“ The eldest son had a place in one of
“ the public-offices, and was very fre-
“ quently

“ quently absent — the third was sent to
“ Calcutta; and the youngest still at
“ school. Mr. Merton himself was much
“ out, so that Louisa, Philip, and I, spent
“ our time in that way which best suited
“ our own inclinations.”

“ We were all fond of reading, and
“ consequently the greater part of the
“ morning was dedicated to it. Our
“ study was not confined to merely
“ French and English authors, for our
“ young tutor endeavoured to give us
“ some idea of the Latin tongue, and I
“ really made no inconsiderable profici-
“ ency in that language. 'Tis true, the
“ pleasing manners of my instructor made
“ me extremely desirous of doing him
“ credit, and I took uncommon pains
“ to out-do Louisa, studying with un-
“ wearied application, every moment that
“ I could spare from my friend.”

“ This

“ The praises I received for my diligence gave some pain to Louisa, whose emulation was great—she determined to overtake me if possible, and was seldom without a book in her hand.”

“ In an evening we sometimes recre-
“ ated ourselves with a ramble in those
“ delightful gardens, (which if you have
“ been in England you must have seen
“ and admired) but as Louisa had some
“ lost time to redeem; she often walked
“ onwards, and was absorbed in study,
“ while I was supported by the arm of
“ Philip, and entertained with the charms
“ of conversation.”

“ He soon began to unfold a tender
“ tale, to which I could have listened
“ from morn 'till noon, from noon 'till
“ dewy night, a summer's day”—'till the
“ stars themselves had disappeared, and
“ were eclipsed by the splendors of the
“ opening dawn. In short, I gave myself
“ up

“ up to the pleasing delusion, nor suffered
“ one thought of the difficulties that must
“ arise from an attachment of that nature
“ (in the situation my lover stood in) to
“ disturb my peace. I made use of no
“ artifice, I had no reserves, nor even at-
“ tempted to conceal how very dear he
“ was to me.”

“ Louisa was the first that awakened
“ my mind to a sense of pain—and she
“ did it in the mildest terms that affection
“ could suggest. ‘Had only her inclina-
“ tions been consulted, the most fervent
“ wish of her heart would have been to
“ call me sister. But she knew the dis-
“ position of her father, knew that Philip
“ was dependent on him, and had he even
“ suspected that his son would again dare
“ to oppose his will, or presume to think
“ of a girl who had no pretensions to
“ fortune, it was to be expected that his
“ violence would be excessive, and per-
“ haps:

“haps he might even deny Philip the
means to finish at Oxford.”

“ These were painful truths, which
when I seriously reflected on, stung me
to the quick, and convinced me I had
acted very imprudently, yet I had not
resolution to force myself from the dan-
gerous precipice — I trembled as I
looked forward, but I used no endea-
vours to extricate myself.”

“ I was however roused by a summons to
return home. The health of my dear
father was declining fast, and little hope
was entertained of his continuing long —
this was indeed a severe stroke, and for
a time drove every other thought from
my anxious mind.”

“ The distress of my mother beggars
description — it increased as the danger
was more obvious — our all depended
“ on

“ on his life—suffice it to say that we lost
“ him.”

“ Creditors poured in from all quar-
ters; we had but little left, only a few
“ hundreds, and my father on his death-
“ bed recommended our going to India.
“ Mr. Roberts had promised to assist my
“ mother in settling her daughters, if they
“ would undertake the voyage.”

“ My mother had been educated high,
“ she had never denied herself the com-
“ forts (I might add the luxuries) of life;
“ her pride was too great to think of de-
“ scending, while there remained the least
“ prospect of being supported in afflu-
“ ence. Her mind had been formerly
“ employed in dwelling on the grandeur
“ that would await her, if my father’s
“ health would have stood the climate,
“ and enabled him to settle with his
“ family in India. She had formed ele-
“ vated ideas of the charming scenes she
“ should

“ should behold, and the state she should
“ live in — and now there was no other
“ resource, she endeavoured to inspire the
“ same sentiments into the minds of Ame-
“ lia and myself, making all the necessary
“ preparation for the voyage as soon as
“ decency would permit.”

“ Alas! not all her lively descriptions
“ of the adoration of the men, and the
“ charms of wealth, could ever reconcile
“ either of us, or make the journey less
“ tremendous. But she was absolute—
“ no entreaties, no tears could prevail on
“ her to leave me behind; I would have
“ submitted to any thing to have conti-
“ nued in England—my mother despised
“ my meanness, but would not suffer me
“ to disgrace my family.”

“ I however obtained leave to spend
“ one more month with my beloved
“ Louisa, before we separated (perhaps)
“ for ever.”

“ Philip

“ Philip was not at home the first fort-
“ night, but nothing could equal his dis-
“ traction when he knew that my going
“ was inevitable. He had no command
“ of himself; and both Louisa and I
“ thought his father must discover the
“ reason that occasioned such an alteration
“ in his manner.”

“ He proposed eloping, flying to Scot-
“ land, and daring the worst — talked of
“ living on the scanty income of a curacy,
“ and being secluded from an unfeeling
“ world. The next moment he would re-
“ linquish all thoughts of the gown, he
“ would go to India himself, in the same
“ ship that I did, even if he could obtain
“ no better birth than cabin-boy. Louisa
“ dissuaded him from such an enterprise,
“ by representing the mortification he
“ must undergo, from being in a situation
“ where he could not possibly claim any
“ right to be in my company, and would
“ have the additional sorrow of seeing
“ me.

" me otherwise disposed of after our arrival. That thought was too tormenting to be supported — he almost upbraided me with inconstancy."

" I endeavoured to pacify him, by promising not to engage myself, but to take the very first opportunity of returning to my native country — which promise it is my intention to punctually perform."

" Our parting was such as might be expected—embittered with the probability of a long, long separation. You have already been informed that we lost our mother on the passage, who recommended us to the captain, and gave him particular instructions to deliver us safe to Mr. Roberts."

" Amelia has been a great comforter to me, though free from any entanglement herself, she has promised never to leave me; and is willing to sacrifice every

“ every prospect of ease and affluence in
“ this country, to accompany me back to
“ England, where we can have no hopes
“ of even subsistence but by the use of
“ our fingers, and that, unassisted by
“ friends, is often precarious. We must
“ expect to meet with much censure for
“ such a step, which indeed without Mr.
“ Roberts's consent we never can take,
“ as we have it not in our power to pay
“ for the passage.”

“ Can you now wonder at my melan-
“ choly? You seem to interest yourself
“ in our fate, and perhaps you have influ-
“ ence enough with your friend, to pre-
“ vail on him not to precipitate matters,
“ by urging us to fix on any gentleman
“ he may think proper to recommend.”

“ To say I felt for these ladies is saying
“ little; I perfectly entered into their
“ feelings, and had the satisfaction of re-
“ presenting their case to Mr. Roberts in
“ such

“ such a light, as induced him to let them
“ remain as his guests without any far-
“ ther importunities. Yet he told me, he
“ could not be easy about them—to suf-
“ fer them to return to England unpro-
“ vided for, would not be fulfilling the
“ promise he had made to their father—
“ and to force them to marry against their
“ inclinations, would be cruelty indeed.”

“ It was very much my wish, for Mr.
“ Roberts to make each of them a hand-
“ some present, (to which I would like-
“ wife have added) enough to rescue them
“ from absolute dependance, and enable
“ them to live in a private manner in En-
“ gland. I had indeed frequently gave
“ him a hint of this kind, but he showed
“ no inclination of compliance.”

“ The young ladies were agreeable and
“ sensible; Mr. Roberts began to grow
“ fond of their society, and much enter-
“ tained with their company. I was often
“ with

" with them, and to me Miss Clever im-
parted all her fears—‘that Mr. Roberts
would never consent to their leaving
him.’

" It damped the chearfulness that was
otherwise natural to her disposition, and
rendered her countenance very inter-
esting."

" Amelia became much happier than
her sister, and was quite the darling of
my friend."

" They had been at Bengal something
more than a twelvemonth, when Mr.
Roberts caught cold, which was at-
tended with consequences most dan-
gerous. His illness was long, but the
two sisters behaved so kind and atten-
tive through the whole of it, that his
affections were entirely engaged. He
made his will, and left each £10,000
earnestly requesting me (whom he like-
wife remembered) to accompany them
“ to

" to England, and not to desert them
" 'till they were disposed off in a safe and
" honorable way."

" I will not detain your attention any
" longer than just to say, that Mr. Ro-
" berts died—the ladies embarked in the
" first ship that could accommodate us,
" and arrived safe in London without
" meeting any accident.—Contemporary
" lodgings being procured, Miss Clever
" wrote to her friend at Kensington, in-
" forming her of the good fortune that
" had befallen her little! An an-
" swer was returned in person, by Louisa
" and Philip, with a request from Mr.
" Merton to the Miss Clevers, to make
" his house their home 'till they should fix
" on some other plan more to their own
" satisfaction."

" The joy of this unexpected meeting
" was as great (especially to Harriot and
" Philip) as human nature is capable of
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“ receiving. The offer was accepted, and
“ the ladies removed to Kensington,
“ where I had a general invitation to visit
“ them.”

“ I no sooner saw them happy, than I
“ made it my business to inquire what
“ part of Colonel Hervey's family still
“ continued to exercise that benevolence
“ and generosity inherent in it. To my
“ unspeakable delight, I was informed,
“ that you, Madam, (addressing himself
“ more particularly to Laurentia) resided
“ constantly with your brother at Berry-
“ wood, and that Miss Barclay was like-
“ wise there.”

“ I was not long in determining to
“ undertake the journey to pay my re-
“ spects to you; and therefore took leave
“ of the Miss Clevers, who had now no
“ farther use for me. Yet Harriet extort-
“ ed a promise that I would be present at
“ her nuptials whenever they take place,

“ and

“ and see the good work perfected, which
“ she is pleased to say I have been in-
“ strumental in forwarding.—I hope I
“ have your pardon for any past conduct
“ that might appear inattentive. I knew
“ Mr. Hervey meant to travel, and I was
“ ignorant of his return or address.”

“ Apologies are needless,” interrupted Laurentia, “ we are all perfectly satisfied,
“ and extremely glad to see you.”

The rest of the conversation would be uninteresting to you, Maria, and therefore I shall conclude this very long letter by assuring you,

I am, with much affection,

Yours, &c.

Ga

LETTER

doth inhabiting shew doog odd odd hund
wifhood wifd I yet or habesq ai bifi
I qod I —— gribewioli ni lemnemur
jndoo hng yis not nothing may evad
and I LET T E R . XX.

and I have devets of them wavin H.M.

DARNLEY's company has proved a great acquisition; his skill in music is a source of perpetual entertainment, and he has undertaken the instruction of Eliza Fitzowen. She had been taught the first rudiments by her mother, and is now indefatigably attentive; so extremely desirous is she of being able to bear a part in our little musical parties.

The house (I before mentioned) is now completely finished, and christened Paraclete, from the comfort it promises to afford them. Mrs. Fitzowen took possession of it some days since, Laurentia having previously provided whatever she thought was necessary.

Mr.

Mr. Tankre had called on them again twice, before they left the cottage; and had even the audacity to offer a settlement, for both their lives, provided Mrs. Fitzowen would have suffered her daughter to accompany him to town. — Townsend makes no secret of his love, but declares he will offer his hand to the fair Eliza, the moment he meets with preferment. Mrs. Fitzowen is happy in that thought, as her beloved girl will then have insured a constant and disinterested protector.

My uncle Greg is no boaster, but I am much mistaken if he is not exerting his interest to get the curate a good living.

Your letters, Maria, convince me, you are interested in these particulars, or I should not be thus circumstantial — ‘In all my griefs and joy you claim a share.’

Nothing of the marvellous has occurred very lately, for a few weeks our days have

glided on in a smooth even tenor, calm and placid as the murmurs of a gentle rivulet. I rise early and enjoy the fragrant breeze.

“ But who the melodies of morn can tell,

“ The wild brook bubbling down the mountain’s side,

“ The lowing herd, the sheep-fo’l’s simple bell,

“ The pipe of early shepherd, dim descried

“ In the lone valley, echoing far and wide.

“ The clam’rous horn along the cliffs above,

“ The hollow murmurs of the river tide ;

“ The hum of bees, and linnets song of love,

“ And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.”

BEATI’S MINSTREL.

But why do I dwell on beauties that are so familiar to Maria? to whose pure and intelligent mind, no blossom blows in vain. Her curious and inquisitive eye marks the progress of every plant and flower that decorates the environs of Ashley.

ley-Green; from her gentle hand they receive additional beauty, and their odorous fragrance sweetly repays her care."

You tell me, "that the trees and shrubs sympathize with you, and mourn the absence of Eglantine." Ah! flattering friend! Eglantine did indeed take leave of them with regret—she loved them with an enthusiastic fondness; and had a presaging sentiment that she should never experience more perfect happiness than she had tasted under their pleasing shade.

The sheep—the poultry—nay, even inanimate objects that surrounded the parsonage were endeared to me. I considered them as friends, whom, perhaps, I should see no more — my mind was impressed with melancholy when I bid them farewell. Yet surely Laurentia will sometime spare me, if she cannot be prevailed on to undertake so long a journey herself—and I shall again visit Northumberland.

At any rate, I flatter myself with the pleasing thought of having you for my companion in town, the ensuing winter. Your excellent parents cannot deny me a request so reasonable — they must not for ever seclude from the world, one, whose amiable manners will so greatly contribute to embellish the politest circles.

Laurentia's health is apparently better, but whenever we talk of London, as a winter residence, her dear pensive countenance assumes the gloom of dissatisfaction, and I cannot but fear we shall have great difficulty in persuading her to leave the country. Nothing but the idea of again meeting my friend, of again embracing the sister of my affections, could induce me to press this suit so warmly; for I promise myself but little pleasure by mixing in scenes of gaiety and dissipation, where the heart cannot be interested, and where modesty and simplicity may be ridiculed as old fashioned and outré.

But

But I must not neglect to inform you, — that the other morning, as we were at breakfast, "I have been thinking," said my uncle, "that Eglantine's birth-day is near, and I have some thoughts of giving a ball on the occasion." The features of Laurentia wore an unusual gravity, which did not pass unnoticed by her brother — He fixed his eyes on my face, in which was painted a sort of fearful pleasure. — "Enough," said he, and turning to my aunt, "do pray, my dear Laurentia, consider that something is due to youth — Eglantine has been with us almost three months, and she is scarcely known three miles from the wood. I can perceive this proposal meets her approbation, and I must hope you will not oppose it." A short silence ensued, during which I could not avoid shewing some anxiety. Laurentia read my feelings, a half smile illuminated her countenance, which was corrected by a shake of her head. "I cannot," returned she, "consent to be present

at your entertainment, unless you will gratify my whim, and send cards of invitation to the neighbouring families for a masked ball."

My uncle made some objections, but the desire of obliging his sister prevailed, and she had the satisfaction of gaining her point.

The idea was so novel to me, I was in a moment perplexed to determine on a character for myself; and almost in the same breath, asked my uncle, Laurentia, and Darnley, what they would be?

"What I am," replied my uncle, getting off his chair, and placing his hands behind him, then advancing two steps, "I was once in the Navy, and a true British Sailor is above disguise." He felt satisfied with himself, and returned to his seat.

Laurentia

Laurentia protested she would not discover what she meant to represent 'till the very evening arrived; and it was quite her wish that both Darnley and myself would be equally secret—she thought the pleasure of the evening would be greatly enhanced by the surprise of finding one another out.

Darnley assented to this opinion, and my uncle desired we would please ourselves. — Preparations are absolutely making, and invitations sent out. When it is all over, you shall have a full and true account from

Your very affectionate,

LETTER XXI.

YOUR curiosity, Maria, will no doubt be raised, to think what character your poor simple friend could, with any degree of propriety assume. Indeed it was long a puzzle to myself. Laurentia would not advise. Mrs. Fitzowen and Eliza were both silent, nor could I devise what they intended for themselves.

At length I determined on a milk-maid. My habiliments were soon prepared, and occasioned but little trouble. The evening arrived.

Laurentia had been invisible the whole of the day, and Darnley the greater part of it.

My

My uncle persevered in his resolution of not being masked, and received his motly guests in propria persona.

I did not chuse to make my appearance 'till the room was pretty well filled. Nothing but the security of my disguise could have inspired me with sufficient courage to do so at all.

With a striped short petticoat, little straw hat, and a small pail under my arm, I tripped in among them, and was looking around to discover Eliza, when a smart sailor (whose person was remarkably elegant) stopped to survey me. He retreated a few steps, then turned on his heel, and springing on the back of a sofa that was under the music-gallery, he spoke to the musicians, and was at my side again in an instant.

He threw one arm carelessly round my waist, and gently taking hold of my pail, began

began singing, “ Well met, pretty maid, &c. &c.” To which I ventured to reply, “ Pshaw, let me alone, &c. &c.”

We went through the Duet, and the company appeared to be well entertained. On the part of the sailor it was excellently performed; nor will I be so affected as to say, it was ill sung by Eglantine.

A general silence had been preserved— to the major part of the company I was personally unknown, but my voice betrayed me to those who had heard me sing before. My uncle came forward, chuckled me under the chin, called me a good girl, and bade me take care of my cows.

The sailor was unwilling to part, he endeavoured to detain my hand, and offered himself for a partner. I told him, I would dance with him at the next wake, but I was then going to see the Queen. For at that instant a lady was entering, habited
as

as Queen Elizabeth, with three maids of honor (in character) to attend her — the majesty of her deportment was well adapted to the character she assumed; though I assure you, she now and then dealt a little roughly with her attendants, (who I afterwards understood were her own daughters) chusing to exhibit those traits which were the least amiable in the poor maiden Queen.

As I was gazing at their finery with all the wonder which the simplicity of my own warranted, I was address'd by a nun, who praised my voice, and wished she could persuade me to take the veil; setting forth, with great earnestness, the peace and serenity that reigned within the walls of her convent. "Tell me the name of it," replied I. "Paraclete," said the nun. In a moment I recognized Eliza. We were overheard by a Cardinal, who with much condescension accosted us, and taking the Nun by the hand, would have
led

led her to a feast, saying "the sanctity of his order authorised him to take under his protection one, who having consecrated her days to retirement, was too fair to be again entrusted in an alluring world, without some holy guide to direct her footsteps." "Pardon me, good Cardinal," said she, "I know you not, nor shall this my return into the world be marked with the error of submitting to your direction, 'till I have better proofs of your sanctity, than the praises you bestow on yourself." He was evidently disconcerted, but was going to reply, had he not been prevented by a gipsy, who touching his elbow, offered to tell his fortune. "With all my heart," said he, "but I hope you will tell me a good one." The gipsy looked in his hand, shook her head. "Alas! holy father, disappointment is written in every line of it. Do but observe, my good ladies," addressing herself to Eliza and me, still holding his hand, "how the lines cross each other."

A petulant pish escaped him—“ Old woman,” said he, “ you will never thrive by your profession.” “ Nor will you,” returned she quickly, “ succeed in the design that brought you here.” “ Why,” interrupted he eagerly, “ are you employed to obstruct the pleasure this evening promised?—For to entertain and be entertained came I hither.”

The gipsey held up her finger—

“ Those shall be happiest who guile never knew,
Of counterfeits beware—I warn both you.”

She then left us, and Eliza whispered,
“ ‘Tis my mother, what could she mean?”
“ We will enquire to-morrow,” said I,
“ for at present there is not time.” And hastening from the poor Cardinal, we met a Quack Doctor, who recommended a whole catalogue of nostrums, of every real and fancied disorder.

“ Have

"Have you any cure for a disappointment?" asked I. "The very best in the world," said he, "I will fetch it in a moment," and before I could move many steps from the place I stood in, he presented the sailor, saying, "that was an infallible receipt for the disorder I complained of."

I was really distressed, and never felt more foolish in my life. I would have given any thing to have recalled the silly speech that brought me into such a predicament. I absolutely stammered—"I, I never complained myself, I only wanted the remedy for a friend—for a good Cardinal, that had just met with a disappointment." The Dr. smiled, "I shall however leave my friend with you," said he, "but if he ever gives you reason to complain, only let me know, and I will cup, bleed, blister, and so plague him with the whole &c. of physic, that he shall be sent out of the world, before he has enjoyed half the sweets of it."

The

The sailor again addressed me in song.

"Oh sweet lovely maid, might I hope for your love,
"No tempests or storms would I fear ;
"Should my King bid me wander, yet still I can
prove
"As constant as when I am near."

" You promised to dance with me however," continued he, " and they are now forming a set that would suit us."

Scarcely knowing what I did, I suffered him to take my hand, and we joined a cotillion party. Eliza being at the same time importuned to dance, by a Harlequin, who declared he believed, " it was Columbine herself that had played him a trick, and borrowed the dress of a Nun for the evening.

We continued dancing with great spirit for some time, but were all struck motionless on the entrance of the most lovely figure

figure my eyes ever beheld. The white jacket, the pale green ribband with a pipe at the end of it—a few olive leaves twisted in her hair — the little dog confined by a string, which was fastened to her girdle—all, all proclaimed 'twas Sterne's Maria; she moved slowly across the room, and sat down on a sofa on one side.

Every eye was fixed on her, and I believe few without a tear of sympathy.— She cast a melancholy look towards the music gallery, (and they must have had their instructions before) for the lively tones immediately ceased, and were succeeded by a sweetly plaintive air, during which she held the pipe to her mouth—then letting it fall, in notes still more querulous she sung

“ Ah! what a luckless maiden I,

“ To lose my only dear;

“ Whose hapless fate demands a sigh,

“ Whose death, a tender tear.”

“ But sighs and tears alas! are vain,

“ Yet they shall ever rise;

“ Till his lov'd form I meet again,

“ Above the azure skies.”

“ Come, gentle Sylvio, with me come,

“ We'll travel far and near;

“ We'll search around for Edmund's tomb,

“ Without one thought of fear.”

“ Thou faithful creature, come with me,

“ I dread no worldly scorn;

“ The wind by Heav'n will temper'd be,

“ To ev'ry lamb that's shorn.”

“ 'Tis Laurentia, it can be no other,” was whispered through all parts of the room. Nor could she have fixed on any thing in which she would have appeared to greater advantage, or more in character.

My uncle was affected, beyond what I could have supposed. As she rose from
the

the seat, with her face towards the door opposite to the one she came in at, he took her hand, and asked "whither she was going?" "To Moulines," was her reply. There was no standing it — my uncle quitted her hand, and turned aside to suppress his emotions, and I dare believe, for the first time, wished for a mask to conceal them.

A venerable looking hermit, with a beard white as snow, offered to accompany Maria—"he was going part of her road on a pilgrimage himself, but he could wish her to tarry a little longer, as even he, though bowed down with age, was induced to behold the sports of youth with a placid and benevolent eye."

Maria made no resistance, and the hermit led her back to the seat she had occupied before, sitting down beside her.

I took the opportunity of escaping from my partner, not because I disliked him, but I wished to find out who he was; and again meeting the gipsey, I entreated her to tell me, "whether it was quite safe for a poor country damsel, like me, to listen to the fine love songs of a sailor?"

"I believe he is honest," returned she, "I have just had a tete-a-tete with the Doctor, and Doctors, you know child, are generally acquainted with the private history of every family in their neighbourhood—but take care of your heart, my dear, for I am told it will be in great danger when your spark takes off his mask." I thanked her for the caution, and being beckoned by my uncle, he introduced me, as a specimen of English simplicity, to a grand Turk, with whom he was talking. "Will you give us a song in character, fair maid?" I made a low curtsey, and began.

"Let

“ Let the gay and the great make the most of their state,

“ Let them envy each other and rail;

“ To work’s my delight, and each morning and night,

“ I carry home milk in my pail.”

“ I am blest with good health, of more value than wealth,

“ My gratitude never can fail;

“ For great is the joy, (and it cannot well cloy)

“ To carry home milk in my pail.”

The Turk was so profuse in his acknowledgments of the favor, and so warm in his praises, that making another low curtsey, I told him, “ he quite shamed me, for I had never heard such fine things before—no, not even from the ’squire of our village, or the young parson that was lately come into the parish; and if my old grandmother was to hear him, she would

would be sadly afraid he would make me too proud."

" But tell me, my sweet girl, have you not found a new sweetheart, in the form of a young sailor, who can say pleasanter things than either the 'squire or the parson?" " Oh! Gemini! are you a Conjuror, or a Romish Priest?". He smiled, " neither the one or the other, and yet I cannot help interesting myself about you." " Well, to be sure, its very kind of you to notice a poor village maiden—but I must go, for my friend the Nun wants me."

Harlequin had left her a few minutes, and was playing his feats of activity round a jolly Bacchus. The Cardinal again at her heels, and I thought she looked as if she wished for a third person—so droping my last curtsey to the Turk, I hastened to Eliza, and was time enough to hear the conclusion of a very eloquent speech, though it was spoken in a low voice.

VOL. II.

H

"I

"I cannot," said the Nun, "accept your love. Have you not sworn celibacy? besides you may perceive, from my habit, that I have relinquished all worldly care."

"But that resolution will I hope vanish when you change your clothes, and even while you suffer this garment to conceal your beauty — it does not forbid you to love on the platonic system — grant me your friendship only." "Friendships suddenly contracted between parties that are unknown to each other, seldom stand the test of time. When I am assured, by the superior of our holy house, that you are a true and faithful minister, I may not be so much afraid of you." "I would rather be indebted to you for your own good opinion, unaided by any other recommendation than my fidelity to you — but surely you will not persist in refusing to dance with me." So saying, he seized both her reluctant hands, and dragged her to the other end of the room.

My

My honest friend, the sailor, was foot-ing away with one of Elizabeth's maids of honor; and Harlequin returning at the moment I was disengaged, I accepted him for a couple of dances, and followed Eliza.

I soon perceived, what indeed I had be-fore suspected, that the Curate had changed his black coat for the party-coloured jac-
ket and wooden sword. From him I learnt the names of every one present, the Car-dinal and a spruce Jockey excepted.— Harlequin had been told by the gypsey, to watch those two, and he had taken pretty good care to keep an eye on them.

When the two dances were ended, Har-lequin seized the Nun, and taking her to a seat, brandished his sword, declaring she was his own for the rest of the evening. An elegant woman, attired as Diana, ap-plied to the Cardinal "to protect her from the disagreeable importunities of Pan,

who had followed and teized her the whole evening." He could not withstand this request from the chaste Goddess, and offering his hand, they mingled in the crowd.

Maria was leaving the room, I flew to her, but persuasion had no effect. She persisted in her design of travelling, (as she said) 'twas the only expedient to alleviate the sorrows that had touched her brain. She bid me "remember her in my prayers to the virgin," and with a pathetic adieu disappeared, nor did we see her any more that night.

The poor Hermit (Darnley) looked very disconsolate when she was gone, there remained no figure so attractive to allure his stay, and he had certainly retired to his cell, had I not taken the seat Maria quitted, and by a significant look recalled him. I was glad to sit down (being rather fatigued with so much exercise.) He did the same. "Poor Maria," said I. "She

has

has been sore bruised," replied the Hermit. Both our thoughts were I believe fixed on the real woes of Laurentia, and we mutually breathed a sigh at the recollection of them.

The Turkish Nobleman (I before mentioned) joined us. "Are you receiving the instructions of wisdom from this venerable sage; or is he condemning all worldly pleasures, and steeling your gentle heart against the soft persuasions of love?" — "Alas! neither," returned the Hermit. "To the former I could have little hope of her listening at such a time as this; and the preservation of her inestimable heart, would not be much forwarded by the cautions of an old man, who she would think knew not how to value it."

The sailor came up, "I don't much like dancing with fine ladies," said he, "I had rather hear the musical voice of my charming milk-maid here, than be the first

Lord of the admiralty." "Indeed," returned I, "I begin to suspect that you have some ambition, and are only come here, in consequence of disappointed hopes at court."

"Ah! cruel creature to suppose,
"That vile ambition could detain
"The breast, where love with honor glows,
"And one that's born to wear your chain."

This was sung with an air and voice inspired to captivate — he appeared more animated than ever, and insisted on attending me into the supper room, where a handsome cold collation was set out, and where the company sat down in parties as best suited their inclinations.

I was very unwilling to take off my mask (which had indeed only concealed part of my face) but observing that most of the ladies did so, I could not refuse the

the request of my partner, who himself set me the example with inimitable grace, and discovered a face he had no reason to be ashamed of. I am afraid, Maria, your poor friend, acted more like a simpleton than before—and the provoking Quack Doctor (who was Dr. W—, the Physician that always attends Laurentia) happening to sit down at the same table, entirely disconcerted me, by his winks and nods. I really felt as if it was quite a scheme to bring Maitland and I together; to which scheme every body was to lend a helping hand, and that it was absolutely determined by all parties, we should (according to the common expression) fall in love with each other.

I was so mortified by this conjecture, which was still more strengthened, from seeing my uncle and the Turk, who was no other than Sir William Maitland, (father of Charles Maitland, that represented the sailor) walk in together arm in arm;

and the latter, when unmasked, gave a sort of significant smile on observing the attentions his son paid me. I was absolutely quite cross, and made a mental resolution not to be pleased at any thing he should say.

Yet to you, Maria, I must confess, this resolution was broke in less than five minutes from the time it was made. It was impossible to continue my gravity. He was so lively, so agreeable, that notwithstanding the silence I endeavoured to preserve on my part, his penetration could not fail of discovering that he was listened to with pleasure; and perhaps, thinking me (as in fact I really am) a poor inexperienced girl, that had never before seen so accomplished a being as himself — he pitied my inability to hold a conversation on equal terms, and kindly spared me, by not introducing any subject on which it was necessary for me to be very loquacious.

I was however very desirous to return into the dancing-room as soon as possible, that I might in some degree shade that face, on which Maitland seemed to gaze with peculiar satisfaction. He never stired from me afterwards, nor had I any opportunity of speaking to Eliza, unheard by him.

Nothing farther worth communicating occurred, except a most impudent attempt to carry off Eliza. The company had began to disperse, my uncle's chaise was to convey Mrs. Fitzowen and her daughter home. They had wished me good night, and while Mr. Townsend was handing in the mother, the Cardinal and his Jockey friend seized the poor girl, and had absolutely borne her to the step of another chaise that was waiting. Eliza screamed, her lover flew to her assistance, and with the help of two servants, prevented them from forcing her quite into the carriage.

She was so frightened, that in attending to her, the two miscreants were suffered to jump in themselves, and were drove away with the utmost rapidity. The consternation every one was thrown into prevented a pursuit at the time, and afterwards it would have been fruitless.

Mrs. Fitzowen, Eliza, and Townsend, returned into the house again, and my uncle insisted that the ladies should not think of going home 'till the next day.

A note was then produced by Mrs. Fitzowen, which she said had been given her as she was getting into the chaise that brought her here; not supposing it of any consequence, she had put it into her pocket, and had really forgot it 'till some time after she had been in the room; then recollecting it, and wondering who could write to her, she retired to a corner, and opening the note, found it contain as follows :

" One

“ One who is desirous to prevent mis-
“ chief, takes this method of giving
“ Mrs. Fitzowen a caution, to be careful
“ of her daughter this evening.”

“ The writer of this overheard a con-
“ versation, whereby she discovered, that
“ a person, who will wear the dress of a
“ Cardinal, entertains some designs not
“ altogether honorable. If he is watched
“ his scheme cannot succeed. And if
“ Mrs. Fitzowen feels any gratitude for
“ this hint, she will not attempt to find
“ out his person, which would infallibly
“ lead him to suspect, that information
“ had been given from this quarter, and
“ thereby greatly injure one, who is en-
“ tirely dependent on his bounty.”

This note was written in a disguised female hand, and had given rise to the severity with which Mrs. Fitzowen had treated the Cardinal, when she perceived him talking to her daughter; but she had

not conceived it necessary to alarm any one except Mr. Townsend, who, as well as herself, never lost sight of him.

We were none of us at a loss to guess who the person was that could lay such a vile scheme ; it could be none but Tankre himself, yet he was not invited : But, perhaps, presuming on the security of a mask, he thought he might risk the attempt with impunity.—Be that as it may, we hear he has left the country, and intends selling the Lodge.

My uncle will never be persuaded to encourage a masquerade again.—“ Let every one shew their face that have done nothing to be ashamed of it,” will, in future, be his motto.

When Laurentia was informed of this affair the next morning, she was greatly shocked, and thinks she cannot make Eliza sufficient amends, considering herself,

self, in some degree, as the cause, by being the first proposer of this species of entertainment.

Adieu, dear Maria; you shall hear again soon from yours, &c.

LETTER XXII.

SIR William Maitland, and his agreeable son, are become frequent visitors at Berry-Wood.—The former is so pleased with this neighbourhood, that he talks of purchasing the Hunting Lodge belonging to Mr. Tankre, which is really advertised to be sold. At present they are at a Mr. Franks's, at Sandy-Hill, where they came to enjoy the diversion of shooting.

Sir William is about fifty, handsome in his person, and has always something pleasant

fant to say, whenever he addresses himself to the ladies. He has been much abroad, and travelled with his son in the capacity of tutor (under such a tutor who can doubt the improvements that son made?) They have not been long in England, nor are they in possession of any country residence, except one at Knightsbridge may be called so.

My uncle and the baronet had formerly a slight acquaintance, which they both seem equally desirous of renewing; nor does Charles appear at all averse to the growing intimacy.

The loves of Townshend and Eliza go on prosperously.—My uncle has procured the curate a presentation to the living of W—, worth upwards of two hundred per annum. It will be necessary for him to reside on it, and its being in another county is the only disagreeable circumstance. However, Eliza declares she will not be married

married the first year, and therefore I shall not be obliged to part with her at present.

A summons from my uncle to attend him on a morning visit to the Franks's—so adieu till I return.

IN CONTINUATION.

As I am at present rather lame (the cause of which I shall presently explain) you, Maria, must expect that I shall spend much of my time in writing, and shall therefore inform you of a little adventure I met with in returning from Sandy-Hill the other morning.

Neither Mr. or Mrs. Franks, or Sir William Maitland, being at home, I did not chuse to dismount, and had turned my horse quite round to leave the court-yard, when Charles Maitland (who was writing in the study) flew to the door, and intreated us to stop only a few minutes while his

his horse could be brought out, and he would do himself the pleasure of riding part of the way with us.

My uncle then proposed going round by a farm, on which stood a remarkable large oak, which he wished Maitland to see before it was felled. Thither we accordingly went, and from the pleasantness of the morning were induced to lengthen our ride still farther.

We passed Mr. Tankre's, and were about a mile from the Lodge, when the explosion of a gun behind a hedge frightened my horse, and being intirely off my guard, I was thrown in an instant. Mr. Maitland, my uncle, and the servants, were as instantly off their horses to assist me; and the former raising me up, I perceived myself very lame, which was occasioned by one of my legs being bent under me in the fall. It is, indeed, much bruised,

bruised, but I hope of no lasting consequence.

The pain at the time was violent, and made me look very pale. Both my uncle and Charles were alarmed, and, perhaps, apprehended me much worse hurt than I really was; for, observing a few straggling houses a little before us, they proposed carrying me to one of them, and sending a servant home for the chaise.

We were let into the first house by a pretty looking woman, whose cloaths and furniture seemed much superior to what I should have expected to find in such a situation. Her countenance had a melancholy cast, and she appeared to have been weeping; but reached cold water, and every thing we required, with great good-nature, although there was a dirty looking girl, who officiated as her servant.

Finding

Finding myself rather faint and unwell, I requested to go up stairs, attended only by the young woman (who told us her name was Bowers.) Maitland would not suffer me to walk, but, taking me in his arms, carried me into an upper room, and then left me. After some little time I grew better, and was surprised at the neatness, and even elegance, of every thing around me.

The poor woman burst into tears, and, perhaps, from a consciousness of the appearance of impropriety, thought I judged unfavorably of her.

"Ah! dear Madam," said she, "you see before you a very wretched creature; yet, from the sweetness of your looks, I am inclined to think you will rather pity than upbraid me." — "I pity every one that is unhappy, and can have no right to upbraid you, who have been so kind in assisting me." — "Ah! you are very good, and,

and, perhaps, Providence has thrown you in my way to reclaim me from the paths of vice ; for," added she, with a blush of the deepest hue, "you already guess that these fine things are the wages of my shame."—"Indeed, I had no such thought, and am sorry you should suppose I am so easily awakened to suspicion."

"Nothing but my own guilt could make me afraid of it. I have of late been unused to the society of the virtuous ; I dread to encounter their presence, and fancy every eye can read what passes in my bosom."

"This self-accusation does not bespeak a mind hardened in that which is wrong ; and, from your present remorse, may I not conclude, that you would embrace an opportunity of amending that part of your conduct which you are convinced is improper ?"

"Oh !

"Oh! most gladly," said she, her features brightening with the flush of hope; "but I have no friend that will receive me. Abandoned by him that brought me hither, to whom can I apply? Believe me, Madam, there is no occupation so mean but I would accept, and perform the duties of it with thankfulness, could I be so happy as to obtain a recommendation. Alas! what can I hope for without a character?" She paused, and hung down her head.

The gentlemen below were impatient, and, fearful I was detained by illness, my uncle would not be refused admittance; he persuaded me to rest on the bed till the carriage came; but did not leave the room, and therefore I could have no farther conversation with Mrs. Bowers on a subject that so nearly concerned her.

When the chaise arrived I was carried to it, and thanking Mrs. Bowers for her civility,

civility, said, "I should be glad to see her at Berry-Wood." My uncle offered her something for her trouble, but she persisted in refusing to accept it.

I found Laurentia in great distress on my account: I believe from the servants report of my fall, she scarcely expected to see me alive. Dr. W — was already at the Wood, Maitland having dispatched his servant to the doctor the moment I was carried into Mrs. Bowers.

It was thought necessary to bleed me, and my leg being well bathed, I was suffered to lie on the sofa, and Maitland spending the afternoon with us was constantly at my side: He sung, played on a flute, and did every thing he thought could entertain me.

I was desirous of retiring early, and did not stay down stairs to supper. I was impatient for an opportunity of consulting

Laurentia

Laurentia how we could best assist Mrs. Bowers, but I was obliged to wait till the next morning.

Being stiff and unwell I was obliged to continue in bed, and requested Laurentia would favor me with her company in my chamber. I had scarcely communicated the affair to her when a servant entered to inform us that Mrs. Bowers was below, and had called to inquire after my health. We desired she might be shewn up stairs, and when she came I perceived a very great alteration in her dress; it was perfectly clean and neat, but divested of all those shewy ornaments with which she had been adorned the preceding day. She approached the bed, and expressed her concern at seeing me there. I ordered her a chair, and dismissed my maid.

After I had again thanked Mrs. Bowers for her civility to me, I assured her "my aunt

aunt was as ready as myself to assist her, could she but point out in what way we should best accord with her own wishes." I thought she appeared rather disconcerted at the presence of a third person. She was silent for some minutes ; her agitation was evident, and when she first attempted to speak it was scarcely intelligible. I intreated her to be composed, said, " we did not desire her to relate any thing that would give her pain ; it was sufficient for us to know how we might contribute to her future comfort, being convinced that one who could shew so much contrition, must have many palliating circumstances to plead for her deviation from virtue."

" Indeed, you judge more favorably of me than I deserve. My conduct has been such as cannot be defended, and much as I may feel from the recital of my errors, with your permission I will explain to you how I became thus wretched and forlorn."

" I

" I cannot," said she, " plead the smallest extenuation of my crime without throwing some degree of blame on her who brought me into the world, and who, from my infancy, infused a species of false pride into my youthful bosom, which, perhaps, my natural disposition was too prone to strengthen.

" My mother's fortune was originally small, and on her marrying my father (a lieutenant in the navy) it was laid out, with some trifling addition of his, to purchase an annuity for her life.

" They lived not long together; my father was ordered to his ship, and left England before I (their only child) was four months old. He died of a fever in less than a twelvemonth, and had nothing to bequeath as a portion for his infant daughter; yet seventy pounds per annum was sufficient to procure us the necessaries of life, and, according to my mother's plan,

plan; it enabled her (as she thought) to live genteel.

" We had lodgings at Lambeth, and as soon as I was old enough I was sent to a day-school in the neighbourhood, where I was taught bad French, and wretchedly instructed in music and dancing; as to work, it was considered of no great consequence. My mother said I might learn to embroider, as that was an elegant employment; but, she flattered herself, my person and fine face would infallibly make my fortune.

" Nothing was omitted that could contribute to the improvement of charms, which the fond and partial eyes of my poor mistaken parent thought so very attractive.

" My mother had formerly been acquainted with a few respectable families in London; but those were neglected, and a

set of tea-visitors encouraged, very few of whom could afford to outdo us in appearance. Some of them had husbands with inferior places at court, or in the public-offices ; but my mother said they were gentlemen, and their wives had too much spirit to disgrace themselves by engaging in any retail trade.

" One or two of our most intimate companions happening to marry musicians, who played constantly in the orchestra at one or other of the theatres, by their means we had sometimes the benefit of an order for the boxes. That was the summit of our felicity, and there it was that the vanity of my poor mother was continually heightened, by hearing what the young fellows (who crowd in at the end of the third act) said of her darling daughter. Seeing us unattended by any gentleman, they dared to make use of the grossest flattery, and frequently offered to attend us home ; but I must do my mother

mother the justice to own that she never permitted any thing of that kind. She used afterwards to say, "that if they were really in love with me they would follow the coach, and, by observing where it set us down, they could easily find some method to introduce themselves the next day."

" I really believed she experienced more mortification from the repeated disappointments of such chimerical hopes than I did myself: However, she persisted, these opportunities were not to be neglected, they being almost the only ones of shewing me off in public; chance might favor us in time, and we were almost starved at home to make up the unavoidable expences of coach-hire on such occasions.

" We never met with any little adventure that could even warrant a hope of its producing any future advantage; and the health of my mother beginning to decline, she grew miserably anxious for the fate of

her child. A few shewy cloaths, and the furniture of two rooms, being all she could leave me.

“ Just at that time I became acquainted with Mr. Bowers; he was clerk to a merchant in the city, from whom he received a salary of eighty pounds per annum, and was enabled by perquisites to make it up near a hundred.

“ The first time I saw him was at a lord-mayor’s ball, for which we had procured tickets, and ill as my poor mother was she determined to go.

“ We were accompanied by a Mr. and Mrs. Cooper, who lodged in the next house to ours, and they divided the expence of the evening with us. Mr. Cooper was a clerk in the city, and introduced Mr. Bowers to me for a partner: He had a genteel person, was well dressed, and altogether made no contemptible appearance. I was very well satisfied, but the prodigious

prodigious crowd and confusion, that always prevails at such times, prevented us from dancing much.

" The next evening Mr. Bowers called at our lodgings with the customary compliments, which procured him an invitation to drink tea with us on the following Sunday; in short, he soon became a constant visitor, and sufficiently attached to make me an offer of his hand. It was a match that ill accorded with my mother's ambition; but it promised to save me from absolutely starving, and as there was no prospect of doing better, I at length had her permission to accept it.

" We were married, and Bowers removed what little property he had to our lodgings. As long as my mother lived we did very well; but on her death, which happened in about half a year after I had been a wife, our difficulties began to appear.

" My husband had a desire to be always smart in his appearance, and, perhaps, spent more in adorning his person than was consistent with our income. I had been bred up in idleness, my mother having accustomed herself to manage every thing, even cleaning our rooms, and washing our cloaths occasionally, from an idea that hard work would spoil my hands, and make me unlike a gentlewoman.

" I therefore felt no inclination for such laborious employments, and hired a person to do it for me; the consequence of which was, that our income was expended long before it was due. We ran in debt till we could not get credit, and the extremity of our wants tempted my wretched husband to take up twenty pounds of his master's money.

" I was astonished at such an unexpected supply; but on his telling me it was borrowed, I never troubled myself how it

was

was to be repaid, or thought more about it. Some of our most pressing bills being discharged, I proposed walking to Vauxhall that very evening. We went, and soon after the music had ceased to play, we met a gentleman, to whom Mr. Bowers bowed. In a short time we met him again, and he then stopped to speak to my husband, asking him several trifling questions about business, and fixing his eyes on my face all the time he was talking. From their conversation I soon understood that the gentleman was Mr. Tankre, my husband's master; but, as I never expected to see him any more, I did not take much notice of his person; indeed, he almost stared me out of countenance.

“We left the gardens before twelve, and returned home supperless, which, considering we had some money in our pockets, was a piece of prudence we did not often practise: But poor Bowers was not in spirits, conscious that he had com-

mitted an act of dishonesty, which he could hardly hope would remain long undiscovered — the secret was painful, yet he could not prevail on himself to divulge it to me. Alas ! it was communicated too soon, for the next Saturday Mr. Tankre inspected the accounts himself, when the deficiency on my husband's side fully appeared. Bowers instantly confessed what he had done, and how he had disposed of the money, and offered to sell part of our goods to reimburse what he had taken. Mr. Tankre was not so easily pacified, talked of prosecuting, and every thing he could think of to increase the terror of the poor culprit. At last he said, " he would accompany my husband to his lodgings, and be satisfied that he had property sufficient to make up the deficiency."

" They caught me entertaining myself with a Novel, and shedding tears over imaginary distress ! My surprise and confusion gave a glow to my cheeks that, perhaps,

perhaps, at the moment made me appear to advantage in the eyes of Mr. Tankre, and as a proper object for his pursuit. He, in his turn, affected to be vastly astonished to find one so young and elegant (as he chose to express himself) in the apartments of such a rascal as Bowers, and asked, in a more softened tone, "who that lovely creature could be?"

"She is my wife," said Bowers, and will, I dare answer, consent to give up whatever we have of value."

"She is too beautiful" (returned the artful wretch) "to be distressed. I am sorry I have shocked her delicacy by exposing your unworthiness; for her sake I will forgive you this time, but do not abuse my lenity, young man: Use this amiable creature well, or I immediately withdraw my kindness, and dismiss you from my 'counting-house.'" He then attempted to comfort me (for I was weeping

most sadly) and recommended a glass of wine. We had none. Mr. Tankre insisted on sending for a bottle, "as it was," he said, "owing to his want of precaution that I was thrown into a state to make it necessary.

" The servant belonging to the house was accordingly sent, and soon procured what he wished for, which he staid to partake of himself, and then soliciting my pardon for affrighting me so much, took his leave.

" The shame of my poor husband was apparent in his countenance; his eyes could not encounter mine, and for a time we were both silent.

" Can you love me after this, Leonora?" said he; "to save you from want I did it." Willing to make me a partaker (as, indeed, I was from mismanagement and want of prudence) of his fault, he forgot

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forgot that his own necessities were as great as mine ; yet, as my nature was never revengeful, I did not aggravate his feelings by unavailing reproaches ; but readily assured him of the forgiveness he implored, and then every thing went on as usual.

“ In a short time we were teized for rent, which we were incapable of paying. Our butcher and baker likewise, became equally importunate.

Bowers had received half a year's wages before hand, and, to save himself from an arrest, he had recourse to the dangerous experiment of altering a draft belonging to Mr. Tankre, and making it £ 50 instead of £ 30.

“ It was the very thing Mr. Tankre both wished and expected. It was soon traced to my poor unfortunate husband, who had not the effrontery to deny the

fact, and thus became wholly in the power of his master, by whom prayers and intreaties were then disregarded. He could not be persuaded to listen to any terms of accommodation; but on the hard condition of my husband's going to the West-Indies, where Mr. Tankre said, "he could procure him a profitable place, in which he might have an opportunity of redeeming his lost character."

" There was no alternative: — Mr. Tankre would no longer employ or recommend him to any one in England; but promised, if he behaved well, to take care of me during his absence, and talked of making me housekeeper at his Hunting-Lodge.

" I believe Bowers suspected that Mr. Tankre was not quite disinterested when he made the proposal; but in his situation remonstrances would have proved his ruin.

" My

" My husband took leave of me with tears in his eyes, and his last words were : " I shall never see you again ; yet, oh ! Leonora, remember that, though I have transgressed the laws of my country, I have ever been just to you."

" I have frequently reproached myself since, that I did not accompany, and share the dangers and difficulties which poor Bowers has been forced to sustain. I had then escaped pangs of mind which are infinitely more tormenting than any bodily fatigue.

" I was, as it is natural to suppose, much affected at the parting, and regretted that I had not exerted myself more, and endeavored to do something towards the maintenance of myself : After the departure of my husband, the kindness of Mr. Tankre made such an exertion quite unnecessary.

" He

“ He visited me often, nor had I resolution to refuse his presents, and, indeed, he was very profuse.

“ I now acknowledge and deplore my error; I ought to have been on my guard, and might have suspected that a man of his gay turn would not be so generous for nothing; but his behaviour was for some time so respectful, that I only lamented we were both already married, and was foolish enough to suppose, had that not been the case, we might have been happy.

“ I continued in the same lodgings near a month (after my husband was gone) for which Mr. Tankre paid: He then proposed going into N——shire, and told me I was to enter on my office as house-keeper.

“ It was agreed that I should follow him in a few days; a stage-coach would convey me as far as B——, to which place

place Mr. Tankre promised to send his carriage to meet me.

" When I arrived at the inn in B——, Mr. Tankre was there himself; he told me, with some concern, that " his wife, and a niece of hers, had taken it into their heads to come down with him, and therefore he was neither master of his house or carriage : I must excuse it, if he took me to a small house within a mile of the Lodge, and the moment the ladies returned to town, I should be sovereign mistress of both the houses."

" I was alarmed, and thought his behaviour very different to what it had ever been before. He had always mixed flattery in his conversation ; but he had never till then called me ' his charming angel, his dear Leonora ! '

" A

" A hack-chaise was ordered, and into it I was handed. Mr. Tankre seated himself by me, and vowed he loved me beyond all earthly beings—swore he would ever be faithful to me, if I would place confidence in him, and condescend to regard him as my protector—I should be his constant companion—and the most dreadful imprecations were called down on his own head if he ever abandoned or betrayed me.

" The chaise drove to the house that Miss Barclay saw yesterday, which I found furnished in a style that at first surprised me as much as it did her. It is unnecessary to say more: I am sufficiently humbled, and own the misery I suffer is no more than I deserve.

" Perhaps, you may think that my repentance did not take place till I was deserted by the man that tempted me to ruin,

ruin, and therefore you can have no proof of my stability in future.

" I cannot altogether deny that it was so ; and yet I may say, that I have never known one happy hour since I came into this country. Friendless as I was, I knew not how to extricate myself, and the base Tankre took advantage of that circumstance ; for, notwithstanding all his fine professions of everlasting love, and the happiness he enjoyed in a cottage with me, I soon found he had another object in pursuit : He had even the impudence to ask me to return to town with a young lady he intended to carry off the first opportunity.

" I was not so lost to all sense of honor as to become instrumental in the ruin of others ; and I plainly told him, " although I had ceased to be virtuous myself, I never would countenance so vile a scheme."

" My

" My refusal incensed him extremely : He said, " it was ridiculous in me to suppose he should be long constant to any one ; that it was in my power to oblige him in affairs of gallantry, for which he would make me ample amends ; but if I presumed to preach, he should withdraw his allowance, and leave me to find out another keeper, who would act by me as generously as he had done."

" Shocked beyond what I can describe, I was incapable of returning any other answer, than " that I never would comply, be the consequence what it might." He left me in great displeasure, and I did not see him for several days.

" When he came again, he was accompanied by a man, with whom he pretended he had very particular business, and asked me to resign one of my rooms to them that they might talk it over.

" Curiosity

" Curiosity prompted me to listen, and I soon found some diabolical scheme was on foot. They were planning how they might best carry off a young lady from a masquerade that was to be in the neighbourhood. I overheard them call her name Fitzowen, and understood, from their conversation, that she lived with her mother in a house that belonged to Mr. Hervey, close by the Wood. " She has no friends that I can hear of," said Mr. Tankre, " to make any stir after her; — that fool Townsend fancies himself in love with her; but, I think, it will be doing him a kindness to prevent such a match."

" It was then agreed by both, that they should go to the Masquerade, in a hack chaise, with the best pair of horses they could procure, and another pair to be kept in waiting about a mile from the house. " If she is once safe in London," said Tankre, " I defy the Devil himself

to

to find her out." They afterwards talked of their dresses, Mr. Tankre saying " he should make a devilish good Cardinal," and asked the other (who he called Chambers) " if he did not think the sanctity of the garb would silence suspicion, and make the old hag (Miss Fitzowen's mother) believe him some respectable character, that wanted a young wife, and would be willing to dispense with fortune." They were extremely entertained at that idea, and concluded it would be very easy to persuade the young lady (in moving from one room to another) to step to the door, by telling her of some extraordinary figure that was playing pranks in the court yard."

" I likewise understood that their dresses were brought from town, by Chambers, were to be put on in a summer-house, and the chaise to wait in a lane by the side of Mr. Tankre's garden ; for it was not intended that Mrs. Tankre should know

know where her husband spent the evening; he acknowledging he had no invitation, which he however supposed was owing to the insinuations of the poor curate."

" When they had settled every thing to their own minds, they departed, wishing me a good night."

" I lay awake the greater part of the night, contriving how I might best counteract the scheme they had formed. I knew no person in whom I could safely repose any confidence, and the morning found me undetermined what plan to pursue. I at length resolved to be the sole agent myself, and telling Nanny (the girl that lives with me) she might have the whole afternoon to visit her friend, who lives at some little distance, I wrote a note to Mrs. Fitzowen, with the intention of delivering it myself."

" Walking

" Walking had been my only amusement since I came into this neighbourhood, and I knew the country tolerably well for some miles round the house I inhabit. I therefore dressed myself in some of Nanny's cloaths, and making my appearance as shabby as possible, locked the door after me and set out. In going I mistook the road, and went much out of my way, which detained me so long, I began to fear I should be too late ; but fortunately I was just in time. A carriage was waiting at Mrs. Fitzowen's door when I came within sight of the house."

" I sat down at a distance 'till I saw a servant come out, I then got up, and going round the chaise, gave my note to the lady that went in first, made my curtsey, and hurried off as fast as I could ; thanking Heaven for giving me an opportunity of performing one good action."

" I

" I arrived safe at home, and had changed my cloaths before Nanny returned; and although I was impatient for the next day, that I might know how Mr. Tankre bore his disappointment — yet it was by far the happiest night I had experienced for many months."

" About eleven o'clock the next morning Mr. Tankre called—he was the picture of every thing unpleasant, and told me, "his wife and niece were going for Scarborough immediately, and he was resolved to either let or sell the Lodge, because he hated the neighbourhood and every one that lived in it."

" What on earth is to become of me?" exclaimed I, in great distress. He was in a violent passion, swore it was no matter, and said, "it was my own fault that he had not regarded me longer, and thereby been prevented from wishing for variety; called me mere sugar and water, the most insipid

insipid creature he ever met with ; without spirits sufficient to attach any man's affections for a whole week."

" Tears were the only answers I ventured to make to such reproaches ; and when he had pretty well vented himself, he gave me five guineas, and saying, " he should consider what was to be done with me ; I might remain where I was for the present," he left me, nor have I ever seen him since."

" I heard his family left the Lodge in two days after ; and Nanny tells me, the house is absolutely to be sold."

" I have been very careful of my money ever since this change, and have not yet had occasion to break into the five guineas he left me. But indeed I should greatly rejoice to be put in a way to provide for myself, without being obliged to ask any farther assistance from

" Mr.

Mr. Tankre, or without disposing of any thing that really belongs to him. I wish to leave every thing as I found it."

The poor woman stopped, she looked wistfully at my aunt, then at me.—Perhaps Laurentia, with all her softness, pitied Mrs. Bowers less than Eglantine did—had she been seduced by one she loved, Laurentia could have more readily forgiven the fault; but her notions of constancy to a first attachment are carried to a degree of enthusiasm, not often met with; and rendered her, in the present instance, more severe than I supposed her nature was capable of being. She asked Mrs. Bowers “if she was willing to become a Magdalén, and thereby give full proof of her earnest desire to be thoroughly reclaimed? promising at the same time to provide for her at the expiration of the time allotted for her to remain under the protection of that most excellent institution.”

After a short pause she replied "Yes, she should be thankful to be admitted there; for then, perhaps, her husband (if he ever returned) would be convinced of the sincerity of her repentance."

Laurentia was pleased that she so readily came into her scheme, and told her, "she might either remain at Berry-wood 'till she could be sent to town; or if she rather chose to go to her house again for a few days, the house-keeper here should have orders to receive her when she came back." Full of gratitude, Mrs. Bowers declared her wish to be under this hospitable roof as soon as possible; but she should like to see that every thing was left in order at the house under her care—she would go and dismiss the servant, write to Mr. Tankre, and send an inventory of what was there; adding, "she would return her watch and many other trinkets that only proclaimed her shame."

She

She was commended for this resolution, which she has really practised, and is now become a guest at Berry-Wood.

My uncle and Mr. Maitland say, "they suspected, from the first moment they saw her, that she was kept by Tankre." However, they give her due praise for her conduct respecting Eliza, and through their interest she will be speedily received into the Magdalen Hospital.

Adieu.

LETTER XXIII.

O H! my Maria, my friend, what a scene of iniquity is now brought to light! But I will endeavour to be methodical, and relate every thing in the order it happened.

K 2

Some

Some few days since I wrote a note to Eliza Fitzowen, and sent it with some books by a servant. She returned a verbal answer, and hoped I would excuse her writing, as she was much indisposed.

Sir W. Maitland, his son, and Mr. Franks, were to dine at the wood that day, and therefore it was impossible for me to follow the impulse of my own inclination, and visit her immediately, as I should otherwise have done. Laurentia and I left the gentlemen soon after dinner, but were quickly joined by Charles Maitland and Darnley, who were so extremely desirous to have a little music, that we could not refuse to oblige them, and suffered ourselves to be led into a room we have appropriated for that purpose.

We had not played very long, before my uncle sent in to request we would order tea earlier than usual; and Laurentia complaining of a pain in her head, said

"She

"she would leave the gentlemen to my care, and try if a walk in the air would not relieve her."

As I was pouring out the tea, I said in a low voice to Darnley, "How I should like to see poor Eliza this evening!"—Maitland overheard me, and instantly demanded "Why should you not?" "I was afraid it was too late to undertake such a walk, as it must be dark before I could return." "The moon is more than a week old," replied he, "put yourself under my care, I will conduct you in safety to your friend, and escort you back by moon-light." I should like it of all things if Mr. Darnley will likewise accompany us." Darnley bowed, "most certainly." Charles smiled and asked, "why I was afraid to trust myself with him alone?" I thought two guards better than one, and we set out.

The nearest road to Paraclete lay through the wood, and I proposed going round by the cave, as I thought Laurentia might probably be there, and would have no objection to join our party.

'Twas one of those mild evenings, which the latter end of the year sometimes produces, when nature presents her most beautifully variegated pictures; the yellow tinge of the trees in some parts, contrasted with the deep green of others, with now and then the rustling of those leaves that fell, at once gratified the eye and soothed the ear. I scarcely suffered either of my companions to speak, that I might listen (if I may so express myself) to the stillness that reigned around us.

Charles could not be kept silent long; he was comparing me to a wood-nymph, and complained of my cruelty. Half in joke, I declared, "I believed the wood was really haunted, and bid him take care

he

he did not offend the rural deities that presided over the spot we were then on."

As I finished speaking, I actually discerned at some distance, the very same figure that had terrified me so much once before; and pointing to it I exclaimed, "For Heaven's sake pursue that spectre, and find out the meaning of its appearance here." Maitland and Darnley flew from my side in an instant, and I quickly lost sight both of them and the object of their pursuit. Left alone, I called loudly for Laurentia, and made the wood resound with my cries. She heard me from the cave and came forward—I seized her arm, and dragging her with me, ran as fast as I could, entreating that we might return to the house and dispatch servants to the assistance of Maitland and Darnley, who were gone after—"After what?" said Laurentia eagerly. I did not dare to tell the truth, but hesitating a little, "a robber I believe."

Still keeping fast hold of Laurentia, I scarce felt the ground with my feet, and we arrived at the house almost breathless and pale with affright. I rushed into the room where my uncle and his guests were playing at chess, and threw them all into consternation by the wildness of my looks.
“ Oh! Sir, Sir, order every servant you have into the wood, that an impostor may be detected—Mr. Maitland and Darnley may want assistance.”

My uncle rang the bell with much violence, and gave the order I dictated without once questioning me. The alarm soon spread, and, as is generally the case, the danger was greatly magnified. Some flew to arms, and took up the first weapons they could find; not a male remained in the house, and the maid servants came crowding to be informed of particulars—but before I could invent any excuse to allay their curiosity, in the presence of Laurentia, the gentlemen returned, and brought

brought the delinquent along with them, disrobed indeed of his white vestments, but with a face as pale as paint and shame could make it. Judge of our surprise, when every eye knew him to be Brian, the butler. My uncle almost choaked with rage, demanded "What he meant?" Laurentia screamed and was violently agitated. I entreated her to retire, but after she had recovered the first shock, she persisted in staying to hear what he could say for himself, and how it was possible for her to be so deceived.

Brian fell on his knees and prayed to be forgiven, making solemn protestations, that "when he first attempted to appear as a ghost, he was actuated by no other motive than curiosity, to see how Miss Hervey would behave." "Villain," exclaimed my uncle, "how could you dare to sport with the feelings of my sister?" "Have patience, Sir, and I will tell you all. It was one evening last spring, as I

was walking in the wood, happening to go near the cave, I overheard Miss Hervey reading something about people's appearing again after they were dead. She paused some time, and then said, "how she wished Heaven would permit her the sight of her dear Spencer." At that moment it came into my head to represent him, for I had often heard Mrs. Barlow say, "he was just my size," and from her I had learnt every particular relating to his death. So taking my pencil, I wrote a few words, signifying I should be there to-morrow if she would meet me; and trusting the paper to the wind, which sat the right way to blow it into the cave, I stole off unperceived."

" The next morning I went to B— and purchased some white stuff, paint, &c. without letting any one into the secret, I prepared what I judged a proper dress.— Towards evening Miss Hervey went out as usual quite alone, and I determined to
risque

risque my appearance, whether she had the note or not. I followed her into the wood, and put on my disguise with the intention of keeping at a convenient distance. By means of some phosphoric matter I contrived to throw a faint gleam of light on the entrance of the cave, which I thought would both prepare the lady, and confirm her in the supposition of something supernatural."

" I did not dare to approach very near, or to remain very long in sight, but quickly disappeared, and changing my dress returned home, where I waited with much impatience, expecting Miss Hervey would return also."

" I hoped, through Barlow, to hear what effect the apparition had made on the mind of her mistress. Near an hour elapsed — I began to be seriously uneasy ; for although Miss Hervey had frequently remained out much later, yet I could not

but be apprehensive of unpleasant consequences, and half repented my rash frolic. Tired of waiting, I persuaded Barlow to accompany me, in a walk through the wood, and led her purposely by the cave. We went in and found Miss Hervey there, she appeared as if just awoke from a frightful dream, and confessed, something had alarmed her, spoke rather in a hurry, and was glad of Barlow's arm which supported her to the house."

"The next day she was unwell, but as she had often been indisposed before, I felt no inclination to lay her illness to anything I had done; and on her giving orders that none of the servants should inform her brother she had been worse than usual, I concluded she was not altogether displeased with the adventure, and that encouraged me to make a second trial of her courage."

"I

" I embraced the first opportunity, and then venturing rather nearer, I could perceive she beheld me with composure. I made such gestures as I thought indicated silence on my part, and retreated by degrees, when I supposed she had thoroughly observed me."

" These visits were repeated a few times before Miss Barclay came to live here. I was grown bolder by the credulity of Miss Hervey, and become less on my guard. Being seen one evening by her niece, I disappeared as soon as possible, but not without affrighting the young lady, whose screams brought her aunt from her retreat. I then began to fear detection, and made a mental resolution never to attempt any thing of the kind again—which resolution I have faithfully kept 'till this unfortunate evening."

He ceased; and astonishment sealed up our lips. Mr. Maitland then produced a paper,

paper, which he said “he snatched from the hand of Brian when he first seized him in the wood.”

The poor ghost blushed through all his paint, on its being exposed. He prayed for mercy—that the rest of the servants might retire, and painful as it would be, he would explain its meaning.

Laurentia, though the greatest sufferer, pleaded that he might be indulged in that request.

The paper was then read; it was directed to Laurentia, in letters of gold, and the inside contained four lines, written with the same shining liquid, and were as follow:

“Heav’n sees your virtues with approving eyes,
“And seraphs hail you to your native skies:
“One short week more, your sorrows all must cease,
“For with your Edmund you shall rest in peace.”
“Heaven

"Heaven and earth," said my uncle,
"Why the rascal intended to affright my
sister to death. Villain," exclaimed he,
"was you not content with playing your
vile tricks, unless you could deprive of
existence, her, who has ever been a kind
mistress to you?"

"Oh, Sir," returned the wretch, "guilt
knows no bounds. I have been led step-
by step, 'till what was began as diversion,
is likely to end in my ruin." "What
advantage could you propose to yourself,
by conveying that paper to me?" asked
Laurentia, in the gentlest accents, "for
'tis evident it was intended as a last sum-
mons."

"Pardon; pardon me," returned the
fellow, "but you must allow me to throw
part of the blame on yourself — on your
earnest desire to leave this world; I knew
you was continually praying to rejoin your
deceased lover."

"Gracious

" Gracious Heavens! how is this possible! from whence had you such information? Barlow is incapable of betraying and sporting with my weakness." " She is," said Brian, " but I have long had a design on her. Tired of servitude, I wanted to be my own master; it was my wish to settle in London, and keep an eating-house—I had but little money myself, and I knew Barlow had saved something handsome. I paid my addresses to her, and have repeatedly offered my hand, but although she acknowledged she regarded me, no entreaties could ever prevail on her to quit her mistress."

" I therefore set my head to work to effect that by stratagem, which failed by persuasion. I have observed before, that from Barlow I had received every particular I could wish, respecting the former part of Miss Hervey's life—her strong attachment to Mr. Spencer, and the melancholy events that happened in the family.

I therefore satisfied my conscience, by considering, that I should, in reality, be doing a kindness to Miss Hervey, by hastening that period she so ardently longed for; and, after all, it would depend entirely on herself—she might either believe or reject the message I had prepared, according to her own inclination. If it succeeded, I hoped, and indeed expected, that Mrs. Barlow would come in for a good legacy and the cloaths of her mistress. At any rate, she would then be at liberty, and I apprehended no farther obstacle to our union. Long have I waited to put this scheme in execution. Miss Hervey has not been much in the wood lately, and I almost despaired of effecting my project before winter. — This evening she happened to go out alone. I had not the least idea that any part of the family would follow her, and I instantly resolved to avail myself of so good an opportunity. I was proceeding to the place, where I intended to deliver that paper and disappear immediately,

immediately. Those gentlemen have detected me. I have now given a true and faithful account of every thing. I repent, and am very sorry for what I have done, but must remain an humble petitioner for your mercy."

The gentlemen thought he deserved none, and my uncle talked of making an example of him. Laurentia again interceded, and begged his punishment might be left to her — "She would inflict no other, than an immediate dismission from his present service, his own conscience (if his intentions were wicked) would sufficiently torment him." My uncle was by no means satisfied, but Laurentia contended "that in bringing Brian to justice, she herself must unavoidably be exposed, and every wound opened afresh."

The argument was unanswerable. — The butler was ordered to pack up his cloaths, and depart that very night, never

to

to expect a character, or any future favor from a family he had endeavored to injure in so tender a point.

He thanked Laurentia for her clemency, and, I doubt not, was glad to get off without feeling any worse consequences.

Sir W. Maitland and his party staid with us to a very late hour, so much had they to say on this strange adventure.

After they were gone poor Barlow approached her mistress with trembling; the faithful creature was fearful of being thought concerned in Brin'as plot. She declared, "the regard she once had for him was now turned into the most irreconcilable hatred, and that no intreaties could prevail on her to see him before he left the house, so thoroughly did she despise and abhor his base and ungrateful conduct." Laurentia assured her, "she was perfectly satisfied of her innocence, and

and should never harbour a thought to the prejudice of a woman, whom she regarded more as a friend than a servant."

I insisted on passing the night in Laurentia's chamber, for I dreaded leaving her, even with Barlow. The agitation of my poor aunt cannot be described! Mortified beyond what she could express, at having been imposed on, and made the laughing stock of a servant, she could scarcely tell how to support the idea, and almost wished to leave Berry-Wood, declaring, "that her favorite spot would now lose every charm."

I ventured to ask, "if Castlemoor would not be a more agreeable residence?" She replied, "in many respects, perhaps it might; but she should grieve to leave Mrs. Fitzowen and Eliza.—Mrs. Lacells's company could not compensate for their absence."

Sleep

Sleep we had none, and the morning found us restless and fatigued. At breakfast my uncle again proposed spending the winter in town, and spoke so warmly on the subject, that Laurentia made no opposition. She is, I believe, convinced that her romantic notions have been carried to a faulty excess. Perhaps, Maria, this affair may, in some degree, work a cure, and thus may good spring out of evil.

Darnley has received his summons to attend the wedding of one of the young ladies whom he conducted from India. He leaves us the latter end of this week, and Mrs. Bowers goes at the same time.

Sir William Maitland took leave yesterday, but Charles is still in the neighbourhood; he says he will not quit it till I do, lest another ghost arise.

Eliza

Eliza is better, and, I believe, as an inducement for Laurentia to submit to a town life, both Mrs. Fitzowen and her daughter will be invited to accompany us. We shall take no denial from Mr. and Mrs. Elwin, and must insist on detaining their dear Maria.

My uncle has just informed me, that he commissioned Sir W. Maitland to look out for a proper house, large enough to accommodate all of us. The baronet's desire to have us near him will make him indefatigable in the business.

My uncle desired the house might be ready furnished, as he would not take one for any long time, till he saw what effect it would have on the health and spirits of his sister. Is he not an exemplary brother?" Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

OUR family is now somewhat reduced. Darnley and Mrs. Bowers are gone. Laurentia is rather indisposed, and confines herself almost wholly to her chamber.

We have heard from Sir W. Maitland; he has engaged a house for us near Hyde-Park, which, he thought would be an agreeable circumstance to Laurentia, who has been used to so much air. He adds, “ its vicinity to Knightsbridge was a temptation he could not resist; for, he hopes, we shall leave neither our hospitality or friendly manners in the country.”

Sir William is acquainted with Mr. Merton’s family at Kensington. In his letter he mentions meeting Darnley there,
and

and says, "he (Sir William) is sure the Italian has made a more lively impression than mere gratitude in the heart of the youngest Miss Clever; that a thousand inadvertencies on her part discover it, and Darnley seems the only person insensible of the advantage he has acquired over the gentle Amelia."

The great modesty of Darnley, and the diffident opinion he entertains of himself, will, I am afraid, long keep him in ignorance of the happiness he might otherwise enjoy from an union with such an amiable woman: But, perhaps, time, and a few friendly hints, may open his eyes, and lead him to make a proper return. I hope, at least (for the sake of the young lady) that his ideas of a first attachment are not quite consonant to those of Laurentia. — He has hitherto loved without hope of a return, in the present instance, as Amelia's love must be perfectly disinterested, it may flatter his vanity (if he possesses any)

any) and serve to console him for former disappointments.

The latter end of November is fixed for our going to town; but Mr. Townsend has put an absolute negative on Eliza's accompanying us. He says, "it is possible she might meet with Mr. Tankre if she went to any public place," and the curate dare not trust the consequences.

The good girl acquiesced with as much true humility as if she was already the parson's wife; but her eyes confess she regrets the approaching separation. "How can I bear to part with you," said she to me, "who have taught my affections to expand, and cheered my drooping spirits with the sweet smiles of friendship? Before I knew you, I loved nobody but my mother, and I hardly dared to hope that any other being would accept my love: Now you are going to leave me, and, although my affection for my parent is not

lessened, yet I cannot feel so happy with only her society as formerly." "But you will have another comforter, Eliza: Mr. Townsend may tell love tales from morning to night without any fear of interruption." Eliza blushed, and, grasping my hand, "Though I prize my lover, yet I know how to value my friend."

"But," said I, with a very grave face, "you will not relinquish his company, for a few months, to oblige that friend?"—She looked alarmed for a few moments, then regaining her composure, replied, with a sweetly pensiv^o smile, "Eglantine would not wish Eliza to act contrary to the inclination and advice of her mother."

"And so poor Eglantine is to be pacified with a fine compliment for being deprived of her friend's company?—Well, I shall only love Maria the more."

"Cruel!"

"Cruel!" exclaimed the dear girl, with a tear rising in her eye; "Eglantine knows, that if only my own heart was consulted, it would for ever adhere to hers."

"Pardon me, my dear girl, I did not mean to make you seriously uneasy; we shall still be friends.—'Should mountains rise, or oceans roll between us,' they cannot sever our affections." She was gratified at the assurance, and expressed a thousand thanks.

I cannot wonder that Townsend is afraid to trust Eliza in town; it is impossible to conceive any thing more simply elegant than her form and manners: She is, in truth, all simplicity — nature's sweetest child, and perfectly unconscious that any attractions belong to her person.

I begin now to suspect that Paraclete will be deserted before the probationary

twelvemonth once talked of; and should Castlemoor be our residence when we leave town, it is most likely that circumstance would hasten the nuptials of Eliza and Townsend.

I grieve to leave her in such a lonely situation, surrounded by the gloom of winter: But Mrs. Fitzowen says, "it is a Paradise to her, with the prospect of future happiness for her daughter." Townsend cannot quit this neighbourhood till next March, and, I think, I may answer for his being almost constantly with them.

Laurentia is, I believe, tolerably reconciled to what has been long the wish of my uncle; and, if we can prevail with her to associate a little more with beings of her own species, I doubt not but she will be insensibly weaned from those romantic notions that have, at times, rendered her almost ridiculous in the eyes of those, who were

were not sufficiently acquainted with her history, to make proper allowance.

I have described you, Maria, to her in colours that have already excited a desire to be convinced, whether the original is answerable to the copy. I am as sure she will love you as that I myself do; and as for your excellent mother, could we persuade her to make a long stay with us, her company would do more towards restoring tranquillity to my aunt than any other circumstance that could happen.

Laurentia is very amiable, and was she to have some clever, sensible woman constantly with her, whom she both loved and feared to incur the disapprobation of, by giving way to little whims, she would, indeed, become a most estimable character—‘as firm in friendship,’ as she once was fond in love.’

L 3

I have

I have your letter this moment, and feel infinitely more gratified than I have power to express, by finding that Mr. and Mrs. Elwin have so kindly acceded to my wishes. They will spare me their Maria for a whole winter, and I will not suffer one thought of a separation to embitter present happiness.

I was interrupted. My uncle sent to speak with me. I went down stairs with your dear epistle in my hand. I really felt so delighted, that my countenance at once testified the contents were of a pleasing nature. My uncle was in the library. Not expecting to find any body there but himself, I bounced in, and, holding up the letter, declared, "I was the happiest of human beings." He certainly knew the hand-writing, but smiled, and, taking my hand, turned me round, and I perceived Mr. Maitland was in the room, to whom my uncle said, "Look, Charles, and tell me

me if you ever saw any creature more delighted with a love letter."

"I suppose," continued he, addressing himself to me, "that your favorite will meet you in town."

"Oh, yes," returned I, "and stay all winter. Mr. and Mrs. Elwin will likewise accompany their"—"Son," interrupted my uncle, who looked as if he wished me to carry on the joke.

Sensible that Charles Maitland had been particular in his attentions to me, I thought he might construe this as a mean attempt to rouse his jealousy, and the distress I felt called forth a blush on my cheeks. My confusion was interpreted by Maitland to a contrary cause. He supposed he had discovered a secret—yet it was evident that secret gave him no pleasure.

L. 4

"Why

"Why don't you congratulate her?" said my uncle, for she has been parted from her lover some months; and, I doubt not, but those months have been called ages by both the young people."

"Indeed, Mr. Hervey," said Maitland, with a very solemn face, "I am not disinterested enough to do as you bid me. I had hoped, that Miss Barclay had not yet formed any attachment of the kind you hint at — so young too," added he, with a sigh. — "P'shaw," returned my uncle, "they have been acquainted from their infancy. I am told that young Elwin and Eglantine loved each other before either of them knew what love was.

"And you will love Maria," said I to Charles, "when you know her."

"Maria!" repeated he, in a tone of surprise—"Yes, Maria Elwin, whom my uncle has been speaking of."—"Did he not

" not say their Son?" replied Charles, his countenance still expressive of disbelief.
" They have no Son."

" Oh! my dear Miss Barclay, you have generously removed an oppressive weight from my heart, and I must love you ten thousand times better for your goodness." He caught my hand, and almost devoured it with kisses.

" My uncle laughed heartily. I endeavored to disengage myself, saying, " I half repented having undeceived him."
" Ah! you may be cruel, but I will never cease to love you."

" A very pretty confession, truly!" said my uncle, " to make before a witness." — " I should glory in having an opportunity of publishing it before all the world." — Come, come," returned my uncle, rather gravely, " this is gone farther than I intended; my niece is too

young to think of love yet."—"Nay then," replied Charles, "out of your own mouth will I condemn you. Did you not say, she had loved from her infancy?"—"Ay, but she herself has explained what sort of love that was—mere sisterly affection."—"And why should she not love me with a flame as pure and gentle as that which burns towards Maria?"

"Alas! Charles, I fear you would not long be contented with the calm and tranquil affection of a sister for a brother."

"Oh! yes, so she loves me at all; and, with your approbation, I shall enjoy a felicity that monarchs might envy."

Think, Maria, what were my feelings during this conversation. Charles himself must see and pity them. "May I hope that you will grant me your friendship?" said he, his eyes sparkling with delight, which he could not conceal, "that you will love me as a brother; at present I

ask

ask no nearer, dearer name."—"I have always esteemed you as a friend, and as the Son of a man whom I greatly admire, I might say, whom I love. I can promise no more than to continue that esteem till I see reason to withdraw it." "Nor will I ask more," said he, satisfied, perhaps, with the influence which his penetration had discovered in my heart. "It shall be the future study of my life to render myself worthy of your tender regard." He pressed my hand to his lips with respectful tenderness, and changed the subject by asking me after Eliza. He spent the rest of the day with us, and was so lively, so entertaining, without once taking advantage of what had passed in the library, or so much as recalling my thoughts to that subject, that I became perfectly easy, and the reserve I felt for the first half hour gradually wore off, and restored me to my usual serenity and freedom.

After he was gone I began to look into my heart, and really find that Charles Maitland is very dear to me; nor do I know that I have cause to blush when I make this honest declaration to you. He is amiable and good. Laurentia says, "he has been sent by my guardian angel to make a gentle inroad in my heart, and preserve it from falling into the snares of artful and designing men, whom I, most probably, shall often meet with in the metropolis." It is certain I shall behold all others with the most perfect indifference; he can have no rival in my affections, except it be his father; and I declare to you, Maria, had I not known the Son, I might have fallen in love with Sir William, notwithstanding the disparity of our age.

Thus pleasing are my future prospects; nor can I be too thankful for the enjoyment of such friends.

I am.

I am impatient to introduce Charles to Maria ; her approbation will give him still greater merit in my partial eyes.

I wish he had a brother in every respect as amiable as himself ; you, my friend, would then be soon taught to confess with Eglantine :

“ The point to which our sweetest passions move,
Is to be fondly lov’d, and fondly love.
This is the charm that sooths the troubled breast,
Friend of our health, and Author of our rest :
Bids every gloomy, vexing passion fly,
And tunes each jarring string to harmony.
Dull is the privilege of living free,
Our hearts were never form’d for liberty.”

Adieu.

L. E. T.

LETTER XXV.

I CONCLUDED my last letter in high spirits : I almost forgot that affliction could assail me. Alas ! what a melancholy change ! Your poor Eglantine has now need of all your sympathy ; for, ah ! my friend, I have received a shock (the greater, perhaps, from being unexpected) from which I cannot quickly recover : I have lost my aunt ! Laurentia is no more ! Her gentle soul has quitted its earthly mansion, and winged its flight among the immortals.

The day after I wrote to you, I prevailed on Laurentia to accept an invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Franks, to be present at a little dance they meant to give before Charles Maitland left this neighbourhood.

I can-

I cannot forbear reproaching myself for being so importunate : I should have left her to judge for herself, yet she accompanied my uncle and I with seeming cheerfulness. Among the company assembled on this occasion was Major Durant, a middle aged man, but a perfect rattle : He appeared disposed to ridicule every thing that bordered on seriousness or domestic comfort ; and it unfortunately happened that he chose to display his wit, during the time we were at supper, on " those love-sick fair ones who pretended to be invariably constant to a first attachment."

He was taken up very smartly by several gentlemen and ladies at table ; but his superior effrontery soon wearied them of the argument, and he thought he had gained a complete triumph, because he was no longer opposed ; but he could not enjoy it with moderation, or suffer the subject to drop.

I was

I was mortified and pained on Laurentia's account, and whispered to Charles (who sat by me) my wishes that the Major would hold his tongue. Charles had been as uneasy as myself; he could bear it no longer, and endeavored to stop the career of the Major by a sarcasm, which, unhappily, seemed to reflect on some part of his former conduct (but of which Charles was totally ignorant.) — The Major took fire, and demanded an explanation. Charles smiled, and evaded the question; but his opponent had been very free with the bottle that afternoon, and high words arose. Mr. Franks was obliged to interfere, and the harmony of the company was much interrupted.

We danced but little after supper, and, in compassion to my aunt, we left Sandy-Hill early. As my uncle was in the coach with us, Laurentia made no remarks as we went home; but she sent for me into her

her chamber the next morning, and, taking my hand, said,

" Yesterday gave my dear Eglantine a specimen how very unfit I am to mix in large companies. The conversation at supper was particularly painful to me, and I tremble to think how much Mr. Maitland exposed himself, by endeavoring to put an end to it. I feel the obligation he intended, for I knew it was on my account he grew so warm ; but I will not put him under the necessity of running such risques in future. I was never formed to associate with the world, and shall now decline all thought of again attempting it. You, my sweet girl, must plead for me to your uncle, and persuade him to excuse my going to London, for I am more than ever convinced it will not do for me."

There was a steady solemnity in her manner that affected, and intirely prevented me from saying one word by way of persuading

persuading her to alter her resolution. — Believe me, at that time I could cheerfully have given up any thing (however I might have set my heart on it) to have made her happy. As soon as I was capable of speaking, I assured her “she should ever find me conformable to her will.”

She thanked me, in a faint voice, and said, “she did not mean to interrupt my pleasures; it might, perhaps, be necessary that I should see more of that world, which she was daily dying from. The society of Mrs. Fitzowen and Eliza would, in a small degree, reconcile her to my absence.” She stopped, and, reaching her handkerchief, covered her face. I threw my arm around her neck, and declared “I would not leave her — one winter could make no great difference, and by another, perhaps, she might be better.” She pressed my hand with affection, and added, “I may not require your attendance long.”

I was

I was unable to reply : She led me down stairs, and seated herself at the harpsichord. She reached a music-book, which opened at Mary's dream. She sung and played, nothing could be more touching than her air and voice. I asked for something lively. She replied, "she was unequal to the attempt," and resigned her seat to me. I essayed in vain to rouse either her spirits or my own. None but melancholy sounds could arise from the touch of fingers that were guided by the impulse of the heart.

I would play no more, and asked Laurentia "if she would go with me to Paraclete?" She replied, she had promised to visit an old woman (who lives about five miles from hence) and meant to drye herself in the phaeton (a low one made on purpose to drive about the pleasure-grounds;) but if I had no objection to walk to Paraclete, she would call there for me,

me, as she returned through the wood. We accordingly set out.

When we left home the weather was very fine ; but before I had been an hour with Eliza it began to rain very fast. I was uneasy on Laurentia's account, as I knew there was no top to the carriage she was in. I had no servant with me, and Mrs. Fitzowen kept none but a female : However, I was encouraged to hope that Laurentia would be at the old woman's house (who Mrs. Fitzowen knew, and likewise for what benevolent purpose my aunt was gone thither) and have shelter till the rain abated, or till she could send her servant for another carriage.

I waited with much anxiety till near four o'clock ; the chaise then came for me, and James said, " my aunt was returned, but very wet, which was the reason she did not come by Paraclete."

When

When I got home, Laurentia told me, "she had left the old woman's ten minutes before the rain began, and, not expecting it would be much, she thought only of making the best of her way to Mrs. Fitzowen's ; but perceiving the rain increase, and finding herself wet, she had followed John's advice, and, by avoiding the Wood, shorten'd the road home." — Her cloaths had been changed, and she had taken something warm. She was apparently in better spirits than usual, and spent the whole afternoon with my uncle and I. Towards evening she appeared rather fatigued, and retired to her chamber.

Barlow (who always slept in her mistress's room) told me the next morning, "that my aunt had had but an indifferent night," yet she rose as usual. Charles Maitland was to dine with us that day, for the last time previous to his going to London. At dinner Laurentia was taken with a shivering fit, and obliged to leave
the

the room. I followed her up stairs, and persuaded her to be put into bed. The cold fit was succeeded by a fever. We sent for Dr. W—, who came immediately; but, alas! my friend, the remedies he prescribed were not efficacious.

Every eye proclaimed its own private apprehensions. Mr. Maitland was too anxious to leave us—he wrote to his father, to spare him another week 'till he should know how Laurentia's illness would terminate. He likewise excused himself from returning to Mr. Franks.

I sat up all the first and part of the second night, the disorder encreased, and the pain in her head and back became more violent. Her attendants forced me from the sick chamber, and intimated there was danger from such close attendance. I lay down for a few hours, and notwithstanding the anxiety and perturbation of my mind, fatigue made me sleep.

My

My dreams indeed presented none but melancholy images.

I insisted on going again into Laurentia's room immediately after breakfast, Dr. W— happening to come in at that juncture, begged he might see her first. When the Doctor returned to the parlour, he entreated us to be very careful, and added, "he dare not flatter us with much hope, for he found Miss Hervey's symptoms more unfavorable than ever."

Oh! Maria, think, think what I suffered. My dear uncle and the worthy Charles were equally affected. The good Doctor felt for us—he offered to remain in the house, if it would be any satisfaction. I instantly declared, "it would be the greatest satisfaction to me, but I must not be kept from my aunt." He promised I should see her.

When I entered her room, she held out her hand, I gave her mine as I approached the bed. She was in great pain, and said
but

but little. As it was judged necessary for her to be kept very quiet, I was not permitted to stay long, and my uncle was dissuaded from seeing her that day. When I left Laurentia my impatience did not let Dr. W— have any rest; I could not help importuning him every minute, to think of something else. “Can nothing more be done?” was continually in my mouth. The poor Doctor was quite distressed, and recommended other advice. I solicited his forgiveness—I had great confidence in his judgment, but I was anxious to preserve Laurentia.

Another Physician was called in. Every thing was done that could be thought on, but we could not save her.

The very day she died she sent to say, “she was much better, quite free from pain, and very comfortable.” “Then heaven has heard my prayers,” exclaimed I. Dr. W— arose, took my hand and said, “I grieve to damp the joy your affectionate

fectionate heart feels at this intelligence, but it is my duty to warn you, 'tis fallacious. A mortification has begun, and this cessation from pain is a symptom."

"Must we then lose her," demanded my uncle, in a tone of woe. — "You must submit to that which is not in any earthly power to alter," returned the Doctor; "and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that every assistance has been rendered to mitigate and remove the sufferings of your sister." We were silent.—A second message from Laurentia required my presence. I attended with feelings that cannot be described.

She received me with a sweetly placid smile. "I know I am going," said she, "and you, my dear Eglantine, ought to rejoice with me. I feel no pain, and shall I trust, ere long, be numbered among the blessed." I could not conceal my emotions, but sunk on my knees by the side of the bed, and the sobs I vainly endeavoured

to suppress, seemed rather to disturb her. She sighed and continued, "ah! my dear child, why will you embitter my last moments by such immoderate grief? for I can truly say, in the words of Rowe,

" To me death seems like a long wish'd for happiness,

" Beyond what e'en our expectation paints ;

" 'Tis comfort to the soul, 'tis peace, 'tis rest.

" It comes like slumber to the sick man's eyes :

" Burning and restless, with a fever's rage,

" All night he tosses on his weary bed ;

" He tells the tedious minutes as they pass,

" And turns, and turns, and seeks for ease in vain :

" But if at morning dawn sweet sleep falls on him,

" Think with what pleasure he resigns his senses,

" Sinks to his pillow and forgets his pain."

Never can I forget with what fervency she spoke, but the effort almost exhausted her—she remained silent some time, and I had

I had no power to articulate. She then drew out the miniature of Spencer, and having pressed it to her lips delivered it to me, saying, "In a few hours I shall behold the dear original."

As soon as I was composed enough to speak, I asked, "if she wished to see my uncle?" She replied rather sharply, "yes, and Mr. Maitland, if he has no objection." They came. She thanked my uncle for his indulgence and attention to her, and bid him be comforted, by reflecting, that he had more than complied with the dying injunction of his father, in the care and tenderness he had ever manifested toward her.

My poor uncle wept like a child, he had no command of his feelings, and was obliged to leave the room.

Laurentia then addressed Charles Maitland. "If the prayers of the dying can

prevail, may they descend with added blessings on you and my dear Eglantine; may you live happily, and never experience the separating pang. If it is possible, may you both sink down in social sleep, and then

“ Together freed, your gentle spirits fly
“ To scenes where love and bliss immortal reign.”

“ Adieu, my dear children, I will not keep you here any longer — I have quite done with sublunary things, and have nothing more to request, than that my remains may be conveyed to Castlemoor, and placed by the side of my beloved Caroline.”

Charles bore me out of the room, for indeed the last scene was almost too much for either of us.

Laurentia went off by imperceptible degrees that afternoon. I was only suffered

ferred to behold the dear corpse once, and it was found necessary to have it put in lead as soon as possible.

My uncle and Charles insisted on attending the funeral themselves, and left me at Paraclete during their absence.

You will perhaps wonder that I did not write to you before ; but my spirits were in such a state, I could not summons resolution sufficient to attempt it ; and I was not willing to alarm you, my dear Maria, by making use of an amanuensis.

Mrs. Fitzowen could not now refuse the solicitations of my uncle and myself, but has given leave for Eliza to accompany us to town. This is most probably the last letter you will receive from me at present, as we mean to set out next week, and shall expect to be joined by you and Mrs. Elwin as soon as possible.

Charles.

Charles has never left me, and now stays to escort us on our journey. He is every thing my fond heart can wish, and but for him, the affecting scenes I lately beheld, would have been still more insupportable.

Barlow is very unwell, but she earnestly desires to continue in the family at present. Laurentia has left her £50 per Annum for her life, a valuable watch, and some other trinkets.

Adieu, my dear Maria; I trust I shall experience much consolation in the soothing voice of friendship, aided by time; I hope it will again restore tranquillity to the afflicted bosom of

Your very affectionate,

EGLANTINE BARCLAY.

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